

An exploratory study of the motivation and retention of adult high-functioning volunteers in  
community-based non-profit organizations

by

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B.S., Oklahoma State University, 2005  
M.Ag., Oklahoma State University, 2008

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Manhattan, Kansas

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## **Abstract**

Non-profit organizations come in many shapes and sizes and in some cases, encompass a significant portion of community organizations. Since these agencies are largely sustained by the work of volunteers, it is a worthy subject to examine. The diversity and complexity of non-profits available among communities presents a need for volunteers' to be skilled, trained, and experienced in an array of arenas. Non-profit organizations depend on volunteers and allow these entities to reach a larger population than exclusively with the limited staff members available (Fisher & Cole, 1993). This notion suggested the topic of motivation and retention of volunteers among community non-profits for the focus of this study to help organizations effectively deliver their mission. More specifically, this investigation centered on people who are considered high-functioning by the administrators with whom they work through the process of interviews. Non-profit organizations located in Denver, Colorado were selected to participate. The administrators of the chosen agencies were contacted and asked to identify volunteers in their program they classify as high-functioning. Once this list was identified, these individuals were contacted and asked to participate in an interview. This study focused on high-functioning volunteers for data collection because it was anticipated their characteristics and viewpoints will aid in the understanding of motivation and retention factors for anyone working with and supervising volunteers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The findings from the study provide a diverse assessment of the topic of volunteer motivation and retention. The data collected suggests that adult volunteers have varying needs and the importance for volunteer administrators to take these differences into consideration in their management and programming efforts.

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# **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

Volunteers are a valuable asset to non-profit community-based organizations (Lee, Won, & Bang, 2014). These individuals contribute to various roles, which provide an array of opportunities to communities that may not otherwise be possible because of the costs and overhead associated with hiring paid staff (Karwalajtys, et al., 2009). Additionally, volunteers play a significant role in American society (Gruber & Piliavin, 2000) as they allow community organizations to reach a larger population than possible using solely paid staff members (Fisher & Cole, 1993). Each person is unique and therefore, volunteers are valuable in numerous ways to community-based non-profits (Bortree & Waters, 2014). Since staff members of non-profits rely heavily on volunteers, it appears there is a need to examine volunteerism among this sector. More specifically, it is necessary to explore for identifying and understanding factors impacting why volunteers engage and continue volunteering with an organization.

This research provides distinctions of high-functioning volunteers, which will be valuable to people working with volunteer programs. This is not to characterize or define high-functioning volunteers, but to examine these attributes of volunteers who perform at high-functioning levels as one area of performance among volunteerism. This research matter is especially helpful because of the limited amount of information available and will need to be continually reviewed in the years to come to effectively accommodate the field of volunteerism. The following sections are included in this chapter: background; overview of the study; definitions; rationale and motivation for the study; statement of the problem; research question; and demographics of volunteerism.

## **Background**

Hager & Brudney (2004) explained that four out of five community-based non-profit organizations utilize volunteers in some capacity ranging from providing services to others to assisting in the operation of the agency. “Most charities use volunteers primarily in direct service activities, such as mentoring or tutoring. Some use volunteers in carrying out services but not in ways that usually bring them into contact with others. We describe these activities as indirect service” (Hager & Brudney, 2004, p. 7).

Due to a progressively competitive environment, non-profit agencies are requested to make essential modifications to how they function (Salamon, 2015). Since volunteers do not appear as they did in the past due to a different society they were intended for (McKee & McKee, 2008), it is essential this factor be considered regarding volunteerism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Essentially, the needs and characteristics of volunteers should be continuously assessed and not compared to or viewed from a historical perspective; otherwise, administrators may be asking the following questions relevant to motivation and retention:

- ❖ Where have volunteers gone?
- ❖ Why aren't people as dedicated to roles as they were in the past?
- ❖ What is wrong with young people?
- ❖ Why are people so busy today?

La Piana and Hayes (2005) explained that non-profits generally do not experience a lack of people who have trust in their foundation. These authors discussed it is a matter of engaging individuals who comprehend and recognize the current condition of the organization. “Whatever the field of endeavor people are drawn to non-profit work by a desire to make the world better, to remake it to some degree along lines they would prefer – a place of greater justice, fuller

equality, peaceful co-existence, and so forth” (p. 11), rationales certainly differ (La Piana & Hayes, 2005).

### **Community-Based Non-Profit Categorizations**

Salamon and Anheier (1993) addressed several classifications on how non-profit entities can be categorized, which included the following (as cited in Courtney, 2002):

- ❖ Culture and recreation
- ❖ Education and research
- ❖ Health
- ❖ Social services
- ❖ Environment
- ❖ Development and housing
- ❖ Law, advocacy, and politics
- ❖ Philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion
- ❖ International activities
- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Business, professional associations, and unions
- ❖ Those not characterized somewhere else

Courtney (2002) noted the importance of categorizing non-profits because different management strategies are necessary to implement in some organizations compared to others. Community-based non-profits relate to other non-profits through informal, occasional, and program based cooperative arrangements (La Piana & Hayes, 2005). The mission of any non-profit is not to provide jobs for social reformers or a sinecure for the well-intentioned, inept manager, but rather,

to effect change, advance the non-profits social mission, and in the end actually make the world or at least a small part of it, a better place” (La Piana & Hayes, 2005, p. 13).

### **People Who Volunteer**

The following are several examples of people who may volunteer:

- ❖ Individuals who are looking to fill gaps in their lives while serving others and the Community (Nassar-McMillan & Lambert, 2003)
- ❖ People who desire to grow personally and professionally and discover their passion (Nassar-McMillan & Lambert, 2003)
- ❖ Youth (Nassar-McMillan & Lambert, 2003)
- ❖ Unemployed individuals (Ingen & Dekker, 2010 as cited in Waikayi, Fearon, Morris, & McLaughlin, 2012)
- ❖ Retired people (Ingen & Dekker, 2010 as cited in Waikayi, Fearon, Morris, & McLaughlin, 2012)
- ❖ People interested in companionship (Nassar-McMillan & Lambert, 2003)
- ❖ College students (Nassar-McMillan & Lambert, 2003)
- ❖ People who are passionate about the mission or purpose the organization serves (Peachey, Lyras, Cohen, Bruening, & Cunningham, 2014)
- ❖ People who have an interest in their community and aspire to make a difference are likely to volunteer (Adult Education Association of the USA, 1960)

### **Benefits for Adult Volunteers**

Adults have much to offer in the realm of community volunteerism (Fisher & Cole, 1993), which provides an opportunity for every individual to become a resource to helping others (Campbell, 1997) regardless of age, economic status or background. Adults are diverse in their



attributes and the skills and knowledge they can offer community agencies (Bortree & Waters, 2014). When volunteers can establish relationships with people in need, this concept can transform these workers on a personal and intellectual level (Myers, Wolfer, & Garland, 2008). This evaluation practice “has become an indispensable tool of the volunteer administrator for demonstrating program quality and accountability in the use of resources and for gaining support of organizational leaders, external funders, and program participants themselves” (Fisher & Cole, 1993, p. 138).

Putnam (2000) implied that most people view volunteering as offering personal service rather than that for the community. Furthermore, individualized volunteering is progressively prevalent based on the idea that this activity and community-based projects are heading in dissimilar paths. This concept suggested that people are choosing to engage in volunteer capacities one-on-one rather than in larger scale type civic projects.

### **Factors Impacting Volunteerism**

A notion potentially impacting volunteer engagement is finances, which is limited and allocated into categories in many non-profit organizations (Light, 1998). This author implied this can cause a deterrent for volunteers as even worthy ideas they may have cannot always be pursued. Furthermore, those who understand the organizational mission and are optimistic of its possibility may be more likely to vouch for their interests. These may be the individuals who engage in opportunities they are passionate about to seek methods of making a difference regardless if they initially believe their contributions are being utilized to their liking. The educational experiences people possess is the greatest and significant forecaster of social engagement among various capacities (Putnam, 2000).

Competition plays a role in non-profits and this concept can be a factor in regards to volunteers, staff, funding, media attention, and public recognition (La Piana & Hayes, 2005). These authors also explained that the idea of potential conflict between others involved in the organization may be a deterrent for volunteer engagement depending on the level of competitiveness and the issue at hand. They also described that if managed effectively, opposition can provide the organization with overall success. Furthermore, quality programming and services to the clientele and volunteers is necessary to maintain a healthy level or state of competition. These authors continued to explain that regardless of a person's potential role with a non-profit organization, people who believe their abilities and interests will make a difference in the agency, are more likely to engage. Additionally, some competitive challenges distinctive to these organizations to keep in mind regarding the motivation and retention of volunteers, which include community involvement, mission, and public perception.

Factors connected to the motivation and retention of volunteers in general can be driven by a multitude of issues. These matters can include those relating to internal and external components (Dwyer, Bono, Snyder, Nov, & Berson, 2013). The nature of the volunteer position can also play a role (McBride & Lee, 2012).

When assessing the overall image of non-profits, it is significant to not always reflect on the idea of larger versus working towards continual growth. Bigger does not always imply superior. Rather, the notion of progression through living out the mission can allow the agency to impact more people through enriching the organizational value (La Piana & Hayes, 2005).

### **Functions of Community-Based Non-Profit Organizations**

Since the characteristics of community-based non-profits differ, it is important for administrators to adopt the management approach that best suits the needs and features of the

organization, level of volunteer engagement and roles, and the industry the agency serves (Hager & Brudney, 2004). These authors also described that sometimes the practice appropriately suited for the organization and volunteer program may not always work most effectively for individual volunteers. This idea supports the need for administrators to be well-acquainted with the organization they are working with and how to work effectively with those being served and who work to deliver the mission.

Practices that have worked well in the past concerning the motivation and retention of volunteers may not always be useful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (McKee & McKee, 2008). The concept of previous practices recommended that processes should be continuously assessed as time progresses to ensure the needs of volunteers are being met in community-based non-profit organizations. Polanco and Walker (2016) suggested the value in administrators developing a dashboard for their non-profits. These authors indicated this process should be implemented with the input of the board and primary staff members of the organization. Furthermore, they presented how the creation of this tool can be valuable for the following areas:

- ❖ Successfully communicating outcomes and data
- ❖ Presenting tendencies over time

Due to a competitive environment managed by four dimensions – voluntarism, professionalism, civic activism, and commercialism, non-profit organizations are faced with making changes to how they function, which are further addressed by Salamon (2015).

Voluntarism is the most important of the impulses and encompasses distinctiveness to the nonprofit sector, especially as it provides expression to a variety of social, cultural, and religious originalities. Professionalism relates to the importance of subject-matter familiarity attained through formal training and conveyed by compensated specialists. Civic activism involves the

structure of political power relating to social, economic, and politics people address in the larger society and in the inadequate contact with situations that arise. Commercialism entails a service role that highlights administrative proficiency, modernism, and cost suppression and the key to these instincts is not to find the single best impulse. This author continued to explain that the objective is to find the combination producing the most expressive and appropriate balance agencies need to endure and flourish while still maintaining their distinguishing features. These impulses were used to structure the participant interview questions for this study.

### **Overview of the Study**

This study addressed the gap of data as supported through the literature review concerning the motivation and retention of high-functioning adult volunteers among community-based non-profit organizations. This study was qualitative and contained a purposeful sampling technique and approach through the process of conducting interviews and examining the information collected. The participants could respond based on more than one current volunteer role and/or organization they are engaged in. The notion of establishing relationships with volunteers can aid in the collaboration of working towards achieving common goals, which is possible when volunteers are placed in fitting roles (Fisher & Cole, 1993).

This investigation examined the experiences and perspectives of adult volunteers in Denver, Colorado who are considered high-functioning by the administrators of non-profit community-based organizations in which they work. In doing so, it further sought to determine the factors influencing the motivation and retention of volunteers and interpret the components impacting their engagement, and what makes them stay. Data resulted from this research will provide information useful in attracting, motivating, and retaining volunteers for administrators of non-profits overseeing volunteers' work. Furthermore, the hope is this study will help current

volunteers further advance or strengthen their intentions, potentially invigorate people to volunteer in their communities, and enrich working relationships among volunteers and managers.

This study also explored the ability of high-functioning volunteers to provide information valuable to administrators. It is expected this information will aid the motivation and retention efforts of volunteer managers while improving the functioning of existing volunteers. The rationale is because of the presumed attributes high-functioning volunteers contribute to community-based non-profit organizations. While this study referred to volunteer administrators, there may be individuals represented in the research who have other titles, but still have the role of supervising volunteers.

Factors were identified as to why adults volunteer for some community-based non-profit organizations compared to other non-profits. This study reveals a better understanding of constituents impacting the motivation and retention associated with volunteerism in community-based non-profits and general engagement with these organizations. This is attained during the sharing of the respondents' perspectives during the interview process. The sessions were intended to provide an explanation as what drives high-functioning volunteers to engage in roles that makes them stay with community-based non-profit organizations. Through filling a gap in the literature, the data collected offers recommendations for increasing recruitment and retention through the research findings and it is anticipated this will help administrators develop a more enhanced understanding of 21<sup>st</sup> century volunteerism. Additionally, the anticipation is these professionals will be able to identify strengths and areas of programming improvement specifically related to engaging and retaining volunteers from their learning of the data in this investigation.

The following outcomes resulted from this study:

- 1) Factors that will help volunteer leaders and administrators identify and encourage people to get involved in volunteer roles among community-based non-profit organizations even when the potential adult volunteers' availability may be limited
- 2) Methods in which leaders and administrators can effectively build relationships with volunteers that will be long-lasting and benefit the community-based non-profit organization they work with
- 3) Elements associated with ensuring the volunteers are making best use of their time and this experience will be worth their time and energy with the program and community-based non-profit organization with whom they are working

### **Definitions**

The following definitions will be used in this study:

- 1) *Adult* - anyone who is over the age of 18.
- 2) *Community-based organization* - encompasses a group of people organized by and for a specific community of individuals who have common concerns and/or qualities (Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration, 2016).
- 3) *Exploratory study* - involves an investigation that seeks to examine a problem that has not been distinctly defined (Wikipedia, 2016 a).
- 4) *High-functioning* - someone who possesses a significant level of energy, knows how to perform work accurately, functions on a higher intellectual level, not affected by low self-esteem, and goal oriented (Quora, 2010).
- 5) *Non-profit organization* - one that does not generate a profit and is committed to promoting a specific social cause or supporting a certain perspective (Wikipedia, 2016 b).

6) *Volunteer* – “a person who works in some way to help others for no monetary pay” (Little, 1999, p. 2).

7) *Volunteer administrator* - someone in a management position who selects and supervises volunteers (Idealist, 2016).

### **Rationale and Motivation for the Study**

Due to the number of individuals serving in volunteer roles (Brudney, 1990; Cnaan & Amroffell, 1993; & Naylor, 1984 as cited in Nassar-McMillan & Lambert, 2003), it was essential to acquire an understanding of how elements associated with volunteers’ background are linked to their work performance. Volunteers represent millions of full-time staff and billions of dollars in unutilized compensation (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1992 as cited in Nassar-McMillan & Lambert, 2003). This notion is significant because of the potential to enhance overall recruitment and retention efforts of volunteers (Nassar-McMillan & Lambert, 2003). “Volunteer work is of great importance because of its impact on and benefits for local communities, society in general, and volunteers themselves” (Oostlander, Guntert, van Schie, & Wehner, 2014, p. 870). To sustain these services for the community, it is necessary for non-profits to be familiar and knowledgeable with volunteer retention strategies, especially for long-term commitments when turnover can be exceedingly high-priced and time consuming (McElroy, Morrow, & Rude, 2001; Musick & Wilson, 2008 as cited in Oostlander, Guntert, van Schie, & Wehner, 2014).

“The nonprofit sector has long been the hidden subcontinent on the social landscape of American life, regularly revered but rarely seriously scrutinized or understood” (Salamon, 2015, p. 10). According to Campbell (1997), everyone has something they can offer regardless of their age, economic status, or background. It was necessary to focus specifically on high-functioning volunteers so that factors associated with motivation and retention can be disclosed. It was

anticipated that these individuals are successful and dedicated to the work they provide community-based non-profit organizations. This notion will serve as an attempt to aid administrators in their work with volunteer programs through the focus on factors impacting the high-functioning capabilities of this population. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the volunteers' work in this study can enlighten other volunteers who may be struggling to find their passion or niche in the non-profit sector. Volunteers can be transformed personally and intellectually when they can work with people in need (Myers, Wolfer, & Garland, 2008).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors impacting the retention and motivation of adult volunteers considered high-functioning in their roles among non-profits by the administrators they work with. Furthermore, this idea involved acquiring a better understanding of what drives them and keeps them volunteering in a community-based non-profit organization. Due to busy lifestyles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was a need to recognize what attracts volunteers and what makes them stay. Since volunteers provide their time without compensation, it is necessary to recognize what attracts them and makes them stay (Dwyer, et al., 2013). This thought will help those working with volunteers, such as administrators, understand why some people engage and others do not. Gazley (2012) explains that to foretell the future of volunteering, it is important to comprehend the current relationship among behavior and future intentions of volunteers. As volunteers do not appear as they did in the past, non-profit administrators must continuously look at how to attract them and keep them engaged to successfully carry out the mission of their organizations, especially during the 21<sup>st</sup> century (McKee & McKee, 2008).



The idea of attracting volunteers can begin by looking at existing volunteers and the networks they have established in the local community (Putnam, 2000). This concept may potentially lead to the recruitment of volunteers they are associated with. Community connections in America have deteriorated progressively throughout history, thus the need for better understanding people's engagement in community-based organizations (Putnam, 2000).

While the factors impacting volunteer motivation can vary from one person to the next, keeping some of these notions in mind can be helpful. Being mindful of the strengths and weaknesses of volunteers and relating to them when possible and understanding their needs can be beneficial (Fisher & Cole, 1993). These authors also explained that when it comes to an organization or initial role, this may be more individual specific or characterized and solely controlled.

Social networks are a vital element of peoples' lives and helps draw them to the resources they need professionally or personally and the constructive attributes of social capital include "mutual support, cooperation, trust, and institutional effectiveness" (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). This author also noted that much of social change encompasses individual and generational practices and social change and generational change are interconnected. Furthermore, the engagements potential volunteers are exposed to and what opportunities they choose to partake in may be based on their generation. "As an empirical matter, social networks provide the channels through which we recruit one another for good deeds, and social networks foster norms of reciprocity that encourage attention to others' welfare" (Putnam, 2000, p. 117).

Volunteer commitment, turnover, and declines can be linked to intracohort and intercohort change among generations and variations that exist among these groups and it is probable among American communities, generation gaps in civic engagement exist (Putnam,

2000). Overall, people are less engaged and connected compared to the past, which does not mean they are not interested or continuing formal connection in their communities, simply not actively partaking in volunteer activities. This statement suggested the need for examining the motivation and retention of volunteers.

“Political knowledge and interest in public affairs are critical preconditions for more active forms of involvement” (p. 35) and Americans have been associated with community organizations since at least the 1950’s (Putnam, 2000). This author implied that engagements in civic activities promote healthy living and that overall, there has been an increase in voluntary associations over the past three decades. This author also described that while the number of voluntary organizations has substantially grown over the years, the typical membership tends to be fewer with more small-scale groups. Additionally, the membership in religious, fraternal, and veteran organizations has lessened over the years; however, growth has occurred in professional, hobby, sports, and educational type associations, which leads to volunteerism.

Nearly half of American’s believe they assume some form of volunteer engagement in organized settings and opportunities considered informal (Putnam, 2000). Involvement in community life foresees the volunteer work and contributions people make to organizations. People who are actively involved in their communities are more likely to volunteer and for longer period of times compared to those who are not as engaged in civic activities. This author also noted that social and community involvement emboldens humanity.

### **Significance for Evaluating Volunteer Needs**

It is important to determine the needs of the people planning to serve for program administrators to provide quality services that will benefit those who will help them carry out the mission of their organization (McKee & McKee, 2008). These authors also mentioned that what

program planners and administrators think to be appropriate methods for managing volunteer motivation and retention is not always what will best benefit the population to be served. This notion suggested the significance of being acquainted with the volunteers' who managers are working with and take the time to understand them.

### **Significance of Volunteers**

Many community-based non-profit organizations would not be possible without the work of volunteers (Peachey, et al., 2014). A more enhanced understanding of this topic can allow participation rates and performance to increase for volunteers and enhance relationships with administrators (Bortree & Waters, 2014). "Volunteers do things for their own reasons, not yours, so your role is to create an organizational culture that stimulates the inner motivation of each volunteer" (McKee & McKee, 2008, p. 68).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The retention of volunteers is a persistent concern that volunteer programs are experiencing nationwide and people are serving in volunteer roles for shorter lengths of time compared to the past (McBride & Lee, 2012). There is a limited amount of research available on the motivation and retention of adult volunteers in non-profits, especially those who are considered high-functioning in comparison to the definition provided previously in this chapter. These authors noted that a significant amount of literature assesses volunteer roles with no designated term, which suggest that duration is not predetermined and should be augmented. "The non-profit sector is traditionally an understudied sector in the literature" (McMurray, Pirola-Marlo, Sarros, & Islam, 2009, p. 437). Some of the possible rationales for people being less engaged in volunteer roles in their communities include the following ideas: busyness and other life commitments, strain of two-career families, and technological advancements (Putnam,

2000). The researcher's initial speculation was this problem was related to the lack of time, availability, and personal commitments.

According to McBride and Lee (2012), research pertaining to volunteer retention is viewed in a negative manner regarding drop out and turnover. The annual turnover rate of volunteers is about 10 times greater than that of paid non-profit staff (CNCS, 2007 as cited in Gazley, 2012). Essentially, this idea implied employees are more likely to remain long-term in their positions compared to volunteers. This concept suggested the need to examine elements impacting volunteer motivation and retention. A substantial quantity of research focused on this subject matter in general rather than centering on a specific cohort. A significant amount of research centered on volunteer motivation regarding what encourages people to begin volunteering rather than providing an examination of what makes them stay (Millette & Gagne, 2008). "One-third of all volunteers do not continue their service with an organization from year to year; instead, they are likely to seek other volunteering efforts when they are not satisfied with their current organization" (Bortree & Waters, 2014, p. 218). This investigation worked toward resolving these issues and providing an overall better understanding for volunteer administrators in their work towards attracting and keeping volunteers engaged.

### **Research Question**

The following research question guided this study: *What factors attract high-functioning adult volunteers to engage in community-based non-profits and what makes them stay with an organization?* It is anticipated this information will be used to enrich the field of volunteerism for practitioners and volunteers in the following ways:

- ❖ Provide readers with knowledge from high-functioning adult volunteers that administrators can incorporate into their programming efforts. This notion can work

- towards improving the motivation and retention of volunteers they work with or seek to engage in the organization.
- ❖ Allow current high-functioning adult volunteers to enlighten volunteer managers and become more aware of what drives the engagement in their roles. This idea may potentially help them further succeed in their work and inspire others to do so and/or attract new volunteers.
  - ❖ Enhance current and future relationships of volunteers and the administrators they work with through the following:
    - Creating a better understanding of volunteer needs
    - Offer solutions to help resolve deterrents that may prevent volunteers from reaching their fullest potential even if they are already considered high-functioning
    - Enable managers to grasp information valuable to recruiting new volunteers
  - ❖ Determine what factors impact initial and continued involvement of high-functioning adult volunteers and what makes them stay
  - ❖ Increase and enhance the motivation and retention of adult volunteers in community non-profit organizations to benefit the volunteer program and organization as a whole
  - ❖ Fills gaps in the literature
  - ❖ Help administrators better structure their marketing and programming strategies to better fulfill the needs of adult volunteers
  - ❖ Gain a better understanding of how communities operate with volunteers and the key roles necessary to effectively manage adult volunteers

- ❖ Factors that will help volunteer administrators encourage people to get involved in volunteer roles even when the potential adult volunteers' availability may be limited
- ❖ Elements associated with ensuring the volunteers are making best use of their time and the experience will be worth their time and energy

### **Demographics of Volunteerism**

The table below encompasses the most current data available, which is the year September 2014 through September 2015. This information lists a breakdown of gender, age, race, marital status, education, employment status, types of organizations, forms of activities, volunteer engagement, and number of organizations volunteers participated in. The volunteer rate indicated in this table is based on individuals who engaged in volunteer activities for an organization throughout the period indicated above, which encompassed approximately 62.6 million people.

**Table 1: Volunteerism in the United States – 2015**

	Volunteer rate
Total	24.9% (median of 52 hours)  The yearly median hours for those who volunteered ranged from a high of 94 hours for people 65 and over to a low of 36 hours for individuals under age 35 (Bureau of Labor Statistics – U.S. Department of Labor, 2015)
Men	52 hours (median)
Women	50 hours (median)
<b>Gender</b>	
Men	21.8% (percent of population)
Women	27.8% (percent of population)
<b>Age - 2016 data</b> (Zwetzig, 2016)	

18-34 year olds	28% (percent of population)
35-54 year olds	33% (percent of population)
55+ year olds	34% (percent of population)
<b>Race</b>	
Whites	26.4% (percent of population)
Blacks	19.3% (percent of population)
Asians	17.9% (percent of population)
Hispanics	15.5% (percent of population)
<b>Marital status</b>	
Married (25 and older)	29.9% (percent of population)
Never married	19.9% (percent of population)
Other marital status	20.02% (percent of population)
<b>Education</b>	
College degree (bachelor's degree and higher)	38.8% (percent of population)
Some college or associates degree	26.5% (percent of population)
High school graduates	15.6% (percent of population)
Less than high school diploma	8.1% (percent of population)
<b>Employment status</b>	
Employed persons total	27.2% (percent of population)
Employed persons – part-time (of above total)	31.1% (percent of population)
Employed persons – full-time (of above total)	26.3% (percent of population)
Unemployed persons	23.3% (percent of population)
Not in labor force	21.4% (percent of population)
<b>Types of organizations</b>	
Religious	33.1% (percent of population)
Educational or youth services	25.2% (percent of population)
Social or community service organizations	14.6% (percent of population)
<b>Types of activities</b>	
Gathering, formulating, distributing, or serving food in some capacity	11.3% (percent of population)

Tutoring or teaching	9.2% (percent of population)
Fundraising	9% (percent of population)
General labor	8.8% (percent of population)
<b>Volunteer engagement</b>	
Requested to volunteer	41.2% (percent of population)
Engaged on their own	41.6% (percent of population)
Persons volunteering with children under age 18, volunteered primarily for and educational or youth agency	45.1% mothers and 36.8% fathers (percent of population) 31.3% overall
Persons volunteering without children	22.6% overall
<b>Number of organizations participating in</b>	
One organization	72% (percent of population)
Two organizations	18.3% (People with higher levels of education are more likely to engage in numerous organizations compared to those with less educational background) (percent of population)

(Bureau of Labor Statistics – U.S. Department of Labor, 2015)

“Volunteers under 35 are most interested in volunteer roles that leverage the skills they’ve learned in school or in their jobs so you may find more success if you offer professional volunteer opportunities to them” (Zwetzig, 2016, p. 10). This author also explained that people of other age cohorts are more likely to engage in any form of need. Approximately 62.6 million people engaged in a volunteer capacity between September 2014 and September 2015 (Bureau of Labor Statistics – U.S. Department of Labor, 2015).

### Summary

Volunteers play an instrumental role in non-profit organizations (Karwalajtys, et al., 2009). Because of the need for volunteers to fill numerous positions in these agencies, it was necessary to examine what motivates them and what makes them stay with a non-profit



organization. The high-functioning volunteer population was a worthy topic to examine. This notion related to the limited literature available and the benefits this comprehension aids in the realm of volunteerism.

## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

While there was limited literature connected to this research study, there was information available that correlated with some of the primary concepts of volunteer motivation and retention. The literature relevant to the subject of volunteerism and volunteer motivation and retention consisted of generally empirical qualitative journal articles, books, and magazines which are incorporated into this study. The material integrated into this study came from conducting searches through the Kansas State University Library's website. An array of keywords linked to the focus of the study were inserted into the search toolbar to locate data potentially relevant to this research investigation. The following sections of this chapter include: the underlying idea of volunteerism; conceptual framework; elements and variables; statement of research available; applicable research; framework and approaches guiding the study; and gap, implications, and directions for further research.

### **Underlying Idea of Volunteerism**

“Volunteers are an important component of community initiatives that might otherwise be too costly or disconnected from the local context to be successful” (Karwalajtys, et al., 2009, p. 337). This notion suggested the importance for volunteer administrators to continuously remember the critical role volunteers play in community-based organizations. It is also important to remember that movements and changes over the year's impact how volunteerism should be approached (McKee & McKee, 2008). “In the last 20 years, we've observed six seismic shifts that have shaken the world of volunteer management and catalyzed this new breed of volunteer and family dynamics isolation, flexibility, generations, technology, and professionalism” (McKee & McKee, 2008, p. 17-18). The Adult Education Association of the

USA (1960) explained that specific qualities are imperative to work effectively with volunteers, which include friendliness, understanding, compassion, and a sincere respect for their assets.

Because the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century volunteer differ (McKee & McKee, 2008), it can be implied of the significance for necessities and desires of unpaid staff to be attained to promote effectual motivation and retention practices. Although, pertinent research provided findings relevant to this topic, it is important to link with those practicing elements associated with this investigation. This connection was established through hearing the stories of high-functioning volunteers working in organizations within the local community.

### **Conceptual Framework**

McKee and McKee (2008) addressed factors pertinent to this study and those that can enrich volunteer programs, which include strategic thinking, passion, training, and development, and forming and strengthening community. The management of volunteers is not always an easy task and can be challenging. Wood (1981) described a point applicable to the management of volunteers; attitudes can be influenced by an array of factors. Furthermore, this can include relations to other community organizations and people internally or externally of the agency. While volunteers come from various ages, cultures, and backgrounds, these factors contribute to the challenge of working with diverse audiences (Bortree & Waters, 2014).

### **Background of Literature for the Study**

Some of the literature integrated into this examination was theoretical. Although, some of these materials do not focus solely about this investigation, the information was pertinent to different elements impacting the research focus. This span of resources over many years provided an analysis of how volunteerism has transpired and changed over time. Additionally,

this range offered an array of information that aided in the understanding and plethora of perspectives pertaining to this study.

Ramdianee (2014) addressed the motivation and retention of volunteers through the Join-Stay-Leave Model. The purpose of Ramdianee's research was to determine factors relating to why people decide to volunteer in specific organizations, what influences their decision to stay involved, and what elements contribute to their decision to leave the agency. This concept formed the Join-Stay-Leave Model to better understand these issues and to help administrators in their collaborations with volunteers. These ideas were assessed through a qualitative study where the lived experiences of volunteers' engagements are investigated.

The idea of providing thorough and concrete implications and propositions is a significance of the Join-Stay-Leave Model investigation. The author addressed the importance of working towards comprehending the needs of volunteers and confirming these factors can be attained prior to recruiting these individuals. If these expectations cannot be achieved prior to placement and engagement, it is not worthy of the volunteers' and organizations' efforts (Ramdianee, 2014). These notions can therefore, significantly impact the retention of volunteers.

Ramdianee's (2014) study included an assessment of the lived experiences of volunteers from Perth, Western Australia who relate to organizations focusing on children with life-threatening illnesses. This investigation encompassed current and former volunteers from three different agencies including: Make-A-Wish Australia, Camp Quality, and the Starlight Foundation. This research investigated the real-life experiences of these individuals as they engaged in various capacities of the organization. The process of conducting one-on-one interviews is used to understand the Join-Stay-Leave Model. This practice was to help organizations who work with and significantly rely on volunteers.

## **Elements and Variables**

“The safety and welfare of volunteers must be a high priority, especially in urban areas” (Little, 1999, p. 57). Furthermore, it is vital to ensure the experience is as enjoyable as possible for volunteers and no matter how long a volunteer decides to stay with an organization, it is imperative they leave with a positive outlook on their involvement. Hager and Brudney (2004) indicated that smaller organizations tend to have higher retention rates than larger entities because there is opportunity to offer greater attention to the volunteers.

The apparent numerous obligations and varying schedules adults possess today may make it challenging for them to find time to volunteer. The Adult Education Association of the USA (1960) described that people must first believe the opportunity they engage in is important and worth finding the time in their schedules to do so and that there will be rewards of getting involved. Volunteers want to know they matter and play a role in making a difference (Bortree & Waters, 2014). It is also vital to ensure the programs and efforts fit the needs of the volunteers (McKee & McKee, 2008).

The necessity to build relationships with potential and already established volunteers is imperative regarding volunteer motivation and retention (Fisher & Cole, 1993). This concept can enrich the volunteer working environment, thus providing a relationship or partnership between administrators, volunteers, and the overall life of the organization (Bortree & Waters, 2014). Additionally, there must be some level of influence and involvement otherwise people lose interest in volunteer capacities.

Researchers must pay attention to the results as a method of determining what works well and what does not which is an element of creating and sustaining an innovative organization (Light, 1998). This author continued to describe the concept of listening to other employees with

whom administrators work as a way of sustaining innovation. This idea is relevant and can also be utilized with volunteers. Furthermore, the practice of supervising by wandering around can be a practical tool for assessing volunteers work and observing or attending to their needs as they arise or when necessary. This process suggested that it can help assure volunteers that their work matters and they contribute to making a difference.

The work of board members and programmatic volunteers is indispensable; the backbone for non-profits, and in some cases, is exclusively operated by volunteers (La Piana & Hayes, 2005). This notion suggested the significance of understanding these individuals' needs to successfully aid in carrying out the mission of the organization. This concept validated the significance of taking the time to comprehend constituents connected to the motivation and retention of individual volunteers.

There were several attributes pertinent to the 21<sup>st</sup> century or new breed of volunteer, which include the following conceptions (McKee & McKee, 2008):

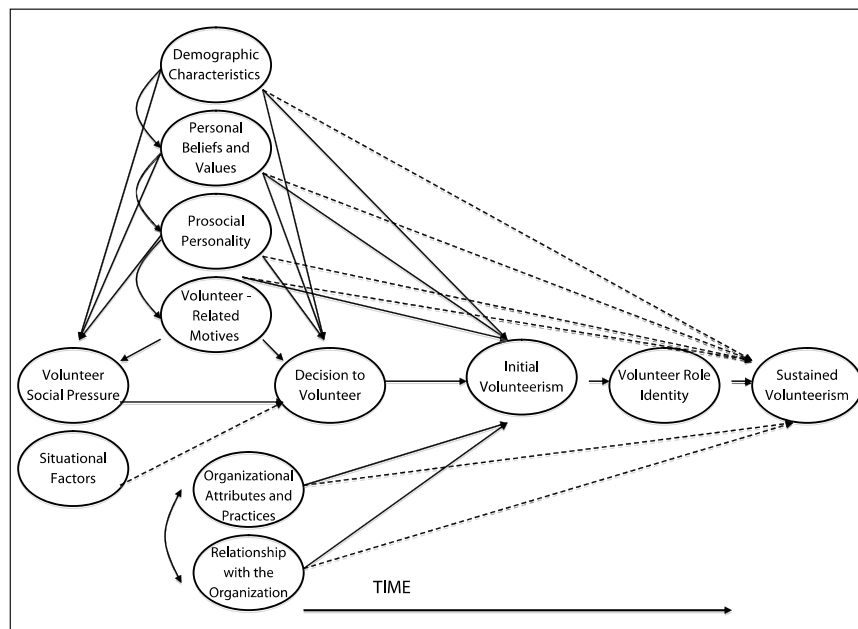
- ❖ Very busy with numerous obligations and volunteers with numerous organizations
- ❖ Desires flexibility
- ❖ Expects to be empowered
- ❖ Zero tolerance for working with ineffectual volunteers
- ❖ Is technological savvy
- ❖ Wants to make a difference rather than a simple contribution
- ❖ Not interested in being micromanaged

McKee and McKee (2008) suggested rules of empowerment, which for volunteers included offering practical and attainable goals and providing clear direction when assigning a task or project. These authors explained that this is regardless if something is simply delegated

or is intended to empower the volunteer receiving the responsibility or opportunity. The motivation for advancement demands an acceptance of a person's choices and values, level of abilities, personal approach, and short and long-term goals (Plas & Lewis, 2000). Furthermore, it is essential to provide person-centered leadership as it focuses on individuals and teams and requires administrators to empower these people. This approach focuses on recognizing personal and organizational weaknesses, which may potentially allow for continuous improvement.

The figure below addresses human behavior as it relates to volunteering. This information includes ideas pertaining to the characteristics and factors involved in people's decision to engage and remain involved in volunteer capacities.

**Figure 1: Human Behavior Model of Volunteering**



*Figure 1. Human behavior model of volunteering. Reprinted from “Predicting a Volunteer’s Future Intentions in Professional Associations: A Test of the Penner Model,” by B. Gazley, 2012, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 42(6), 1245-1267. Copyright 2002 by L. Penner in *Journal of Social Issues*, 58(3).*

External environments help form the work and efforts of non-profit organizations (Light, 1998). In the case of this study, the external component is the volunteers and therefore, this notion supported the need for agencies to work toward fulfilling what these individuals need to be successful. “The external environment contains some of the greatest barriers to innovation” (Light, 1998, p. 33).

### **Constituents Impacting Volunteer Leadership and Management**

Several profound changes have significantly impacted volunteer management and have catalyzed the 21<sup>st</sup> century volunteer over the past 20 years (McKee & McKee, 2008). Furthermore, people have fewer close friends in the 21<sup>st</sup> century compared to earlier years, which relates to the concept of isolation. These authors went on to explain that today, volunteers insist on flexibility and the generations of these individuals plays a role.

Unfortunately, many volunteer managers ignore the cohort born after 1981, also known as Generation Y, or Millennials (McKee & McKee, 2008). These authors explained that the power of technology has opened various tools in the world of volunteerism such as those pertaining to recruiting volunteers and enriching current programs. Furthermore, the concept of professionalism is one that should be of focus in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and “many volunteers today are professional and want to be treated like professionals” (McKee & McKee, 2008, p. 23). This notion of technology and professionalism suggested that the structure supporting the 21<sup>st</sup> century volunteer needs to recognize these components and provide opportunities suitable to the characteristics of the volunteer.

Maxwell (1993) discussed other factors leaders should consider, which include the willingness to accept change; “placing influencers in leadership positions” (p. 68); effective problem solving and ability to recognize issues and managing them before they become more



serious; strategic thinking; interest in evaluation processes; goal-oriented; offering a collaborative learning team environment; people skills; visionary; organizational skills; and works towards promoting growth and development in others. To support growth, it is essential to acknowledge the preferences, values, skills, and goals of the person you are working with (Plas & Lewis, 2000). Furthermore, it is essential to provide person-centered leadership as it focuses on individuals and teams and requires administrators to empower these people. These authors continued to explain that this approach focuses on recognizing personal and organizational weaknesses, which allows for continuous improvement. Volunteers do things for their own reasons, not yours, so your role is to create an organizational culture that stimulates the inner motivation of each volunteer” (McKee & McKee, 2008, p. 68).

There are several components necessary for ensuring successful practices of volunteer leadership for administrators the volunteers are working with. Some of these factors include the following concepts:

- ❖ Offer training for volunteers even an informal informational session can still be valuable (Kerka, 2003)
- ❖ Recognize when burnout may be a factor and manage appropriately to be prolific and effective (Lobell, Menon, & Sikka, 2016)
- ❖ Offer opportunities for growth (Wideman, 2004)
- ❖ Provide an array of opportunities (Outlaw, 2015)
- ❖ Practice adequate planning and assessment (Wideman, 2004)
- ❖ Be well-acquainted with the volunteers and their ability to be leaders and succeed (Wideman, 2004)

- ❖ Encourage and practice a trustworthy, responsible, and reliable environment (Little, 1999)
- ❖ Be aware of own behavior, leadership, management, and style and are willing to adjust as necessary to be effective to the varying groups they are working with (Lobell, Menon, & Sikka, 2016)
- ❖ Be proficient in working with diverse populations including people who have varying interests and ideas (Lobell, Menon, & Sikka, 2016)
- ❖ Place volunteers in well-matched positions (Little, 1999)
- ❖ Provide a fun environment (Wideman, 2004)
- ❖ Offer a fair culture (Wideman, 2004)
- ❖ Encourage as much diversity as plausible (Outlaw, 2015)
- ❖ Advance the practice of restructuring circumstances and issues to promote new alternatives (Lobell, Menon, & Sikka, 2016)

Sanders (1980) addressed numerous key points pertaining to volunteer leadership and management. Leaders should be able to recognize opportunities for improvement, have the willingness to make efforts to do so, be open to change, and have the willingness to learn from mistakes or weaknesses to improve their programming efforts. This author went on to explain that when in a leadership role a person is properly fitted for, they should pursue and lead to the fullest and be proactive in handling issues. Furthermore, this can entail a partnership with the administrator and/or volunteer leader. Moreover, leaders need to effectively manage criticism, instigate plans, problem solve, and be creative in program planning, in addition to having the capability to effectively to develop personal relationships.

Kerka (2003) described several points for consideration when working with volunteers. In regards to development, volunteers should be provided the opportunity in which they can extend, update, and adapt their knowledge, skills, and abilities to enhance their performance and potential. Furthermore, not only are orientations critical when people begin new volunteer roles, but also when changing positions. This author continued to explain that while some trainings may be formally based, most often learning occurs unintentionally or informally and recognition efforts or lack thereof can influence volunteers desire to engage in leadership opportunities. Lastly, volunteers are more likely to resign from their roles when there are disagreements between their expectations and actuality and there are no opportunities for growth and making a difference in the organization.

Administrators should continuously seek methods in which they enhance their programming and relationships to maintain volunteers in their organization (Fritz & Ibrahim, 2010), keep them happy, and productive and these tactics can be attained through a survey process (Outlaw, 2015). It is important not to be excessive with such processes like questionnaires and pressure volunteers otherwise people can be turned away (Amabile, DeJong, & Lepper, 1976; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Musick & Wilson, 2008; Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999 as cited in Oostlander, et al., 2014). These authors implied this may especially be wise if attempting to secure volunteers in long-term commitments. Another method of checking with volunteers is through frequent personal communications and regardless if someone is new to a volunteer role or not, the process of evaluation can determine if another area is a better fit for their abilities (Wideman, 2004). This author continued to explain that through constant assessment of volunteers, adjustments can be made accordingly, thus enhancing the volunteer experience and organization.

The idea of volunteer managers providing effectual communication and allowing the opportunity for feedback can provide a healthy environment (Bortree & Waters, 2014). In addition to ascertaining what factors motivate volunteers, administrators can provide the following: consistent feedback, privileges and incentives, continuing education opportunities, and on-the-job training (McKee & McKee, 2008). Hager and Brudney (2004) however, noted that routine communication and management of volunteers is not always the best practice regarding retention. Essentially, some organizations may supervise and communicate in a way that makes volunteers feel like more of an employee rather than a volunteer and can reduce their interest in engaging. Furthermore, to alleviate such retention issues, finding methods for better captivating volunteers can be valuable and might be such an idea to keep them engaged.

Administrators today should look at what volunteers need as their lifestyles significantly differ compared to past years (McKee & McKee, 2008). This might include examining and considering their interests and what factors contribute to their success and initial and continued involvement in various roles. These authors addressed some questions to keep in mind, which included what can they give them in an ever-changing world to keep them engaged or attract them in the first place and how do they know what to give them. Outlaw (2015) noted that the idea of building networks for collaboration with other similar agencies can be valuable.

It is important as an administrator to remember not all organizations should be treated equally (Light, 1998). Furthermore, some entities are large, others are small; some are new, others are established; some focus on how they provide services, others in what they offer; some work in social services, others vary in their area of concentration. The following statement implied the need for non-profit organizations to make their mission clear and appealing to the people in which it serves. “If your non-profit competes successfully for the full array or

resources it needs and is generally considered by its community, customers, third-party payers, and other constituents to be an excellent actor in its field, it will attract people who are interested in helping to advance its cause in a variety of ways” (La Piana & Hayes, 2005, p. 42). These authors also discussed that volunteers who believe their skills and passion will be utilized are more likely to offer their efforts to the organization, which will work towards benefiting the volunteer, community, and organization.

The idea of having passionate and trustworthy leaders leads to followers including volunteers thus impacting retention (Maxwell, 1993). In other words, people are more likely to engage in volunteer capacities when they observe these characteristics of leaders within the organization they are associated with. This author continued to explain that the concept of integrity has extraordinary significance and results in a concrete reputation. The concept of integrity and advocacy is vital to the success of non-profit organization, especially because of their dependency on volunteer work and may positively impact volunteer retention (Fisher & Cole, 1993).

The factors associated with the effectiveness of an organizations’ leadership can impact the motivation of volunteers (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014). “Communication of the connection between the work of volunteers and the beliefs of the organization about itself and its mission is critical for fostering volunteer involvement” (Fisher & Cole, 1993, p. 69). These authors went on to address the importance of administrators keeping in mind that the needs and expectations of volunteers can alter over time and that such changes should be accommodated to aid with retention constituents. Furthermore, the primary elements of an agencies’ environment impacting volunteer motivation are the relationships within the organization, the nature and outline of the volunteer role, and the opportunities volunteers have for personal growth.

“To work successfully with volunteers, certain qualities are vital including warmth, thoughtfulness, sensitivity, an interest and concern for people, the ability to identify with them, and a genuine respect for their strengths” (Adult Education Association of the USA, 1960, p. 5). These are valuable ideas to consider for volunteer leaders and administrators. In religious-based non-profits, a volunteer leader who displays a strong vision that is a source from God is an asset to a congregation per Woods (2001). Woods (2001) noted that a significant element of faithful visualizing is that “both leaders and followers in the congregation are pulled by the visions that originate with God” (p. 12). Given the lack of availability in non-profits among staff, this author reminded of the necessity for volunteer leaders to can train and mentor leaders. This notion may be applicable in a variety of non-profit settings.

In regards to development, volunteers should be provided the opportunity in which they can extend, update, and adapt their knowledge, skills, and abilities to enhance their performance and potential (Kerka, 2003). “Volunteers leave when there are discrepancies between their expectation and reality, tasks are routine and unvaried, and there are no opportunities to grow and demonstrate initiative” (Kerka, 2003, p. 4). Fritz and Ibrahim (2010) noted that administrators and/or leaders should continuously seek methods in which they can enhance their programming and relationships to maintain volunteers in their organization.

Wilson (1983) identified important ideas to consider when people have indicated an interest in potential volunteer opportunities, which included the following:

- ❖ Follow-ups should be conducted from volunteer leaders or administrators.
  - This can include a very informal interview where the potential volunteer can further explain their interests and the leader or administrator can ask questions for better understanding to assist with placement. These concepts are also

valuable because they can enhance credibility of the leader or administrator.

They often feel valued when given the chance to engage in conversation

where their input matters and leads to rewarding outcomes.

- While follow-ups can be valuable practices during the attempt to place volunteers, it is important that suitable questions are asked and effectual listening occurs. It is apparent to me how detrimental the informal interviews can be if these factors are not adequately involved.

### **Social Media Impacts on Volunteerism**

The idea of staying connected through social media and adapting strategies to effectively connect with people or utilize methods of technology to meet the needs of the average population can be valuable (Ruderman, 2015). This author also noted that philanthropists are frequently disengaged from their targeted populations; however, a social media outlet such as Twitter is a fast and easy method to remain reachable to people non-profits serve. Furthermore, this concept may serve a tool in providing more sound philanthropy as they work to become more connected. “We know that a large majority of people now interact with their personal connections and professional networks through a variety of web-based and mobile social networks, as well as online blogs, gaming platforms, and community forums” (Cleese, 2015, p. 6).

Social media outlets not only provide a plethora of methods for communication, but also the opportunity for people to select their interactions based on what is suitable for them (Cleese, 2015). This author continued to explain that fortunately, these technology services allow non-profits the chance to reach their clientele and potentially increase participation and offer a method of networking from their computer. “Every nonprofit and social change organization can use many online channels to get its message out, foster a community, support activism, and

cultivate donors 24 hours a day” (p. 24), which are powerful apparatuses to help enable social change (Fernsler, 2015). Methods of social media can allow administrators to publish information regarding volunteer recruitment and recognition and grow more powerful connections with present shareholders and local communities (Hou & Lampe, 2016). These authors implied this notion is not always successful with physically engaging people for volunteer capacities and developing awareness.

### **Growth and Development of Volunteers**

“The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership” (Maxwell, 1993, p. 179). This author identified several factors impacting growth and development of volunteers among community-based non-profit organizations, which included the following:

- ❖ What life lessons are the volunteers obtaining from their experiences?
- ❖ How are the volunteers and volunteer leaders impacted personally from their engagement?
  - Leaders who continuously grow personally and attribute development to the programs they work with are likely to inspire others and form prosperous teams.
- ❖ How are these individuals influenced in their professional lives?
- ❖ What benefits is the organization experiencing?

Effectual networks are essential and possible through the recruitment of people who possess the following attributes (McKee & McKee, 2008):

- ❖ Passion for the organization
- ❖ Already actively volunteering
- ❖ Ability to communicate clearly



### ❖ Visionary

The process of entrusting others to fulfill various responsibilities of the organization, builds accountability, enhances self-confidence, and can prevent burnout (Githens, 2009). This author continued to explain the value of allocating work when appropriate and how the empowerment of others is imperative. Furthermore, this notion is especially important in scenarios where a central leader in an organization has resigned or is no longer in a leadership position and this practice can allow for growth opportunities and increase volunteer accountability. Maxwell (1993) implied that it is imperative to ensure expectations are clear especially when delegating work. This will help avoid confusion among roles and responsibilities.

Even though focusing on the needs of volunteers is imperative, an emphasis on the service to the community is vital and may include helping to fill various gaps in the community (La Piana & Hayes, 2005). There were five key elements relating to leadership in an innovative organization, which included: vision, temperament, communication, durability, and innovation skills (Light, 1998). Hoffman (2016) addressed that when attempting to structure an exceedingly effective board, it is necessary to assess purposefully the elements to be organized or developed. Furthermore, this author noted the significant of ensuring these individuals are thoroughly acquainted with the organization and their volunteer role.

### **Significance of Volunteer Recognition**

Volunteer recognition is imperative, linked to the ongoing motivation and retention of volunteers, and should be done continuously (McBee, 2002). “Volunteers feel respected by their leaders when they are supportive during volunteer work and encourage them to express their ideas regarding the organization and its mission” (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014, p. 163).

Another method of expressing gratitude towards volunteers is to trust them and their abilities and once volunteers are informed of their duties, have the resources they need to perform the job, provide them with space and allow them to do proceed accordingly (McBee, 2002). It can be implied that this factor may then lead to long-term involvement.

It is vital to recognize volunteers periodically throughout their engagements and ensure they feel valued (Hybels, 2004). Recognition is imperative because people who donate their time want to be acknowledged for their efforts (Maxwell, 1993). While many volunteers do not expect anything in return when donating their time, it is still critical to confirm these individuals are aware their efforts make a difference and because of their work, the organization can operate successfully (Claxton-Oldfield & Jones, 2012). These authors also noted that volunteers want to feel valued and experience personal growth. When acknowledgement does not take place, volunteers may find that their time and efforts is not necessary or they are needed elsewhere (McBee, 2002).

Recognition can come in a variety of forms and there are multiple elements for administrators to consider in the practice of recognizing volunteers for their efforts (Wilson, 1982). This included the idea that volunteers can be acknowledged in a monthly newsletter, an appreciation dinner or event can be hosted, or through publishing an article acknowledging volunteer efforts in a local newspaper. When volunteers receive positive reinforcement, this can strengthen their self-efficacy by accentuating their assets and emphasizing what they thrive in, which can include informing volunteers what they accomplished, the positive outcomes involved, and the broader influence (Egan, 2007). People are more likely to blossom when they are appreciated for the work they do because they feel good about themselves and have greater creativity and trustworthiness (McBee, 2002). The objective to accurately drawing prospective

volunteers involves offering enjoyment. When those working with volunteers are completely pleased, they will interest others in contributing (McBee, 2002).

### **Volunteer Training**

It is important to be certain volunteers have adequate training and resources to successfully fulfill their roles (Wilson, 1983). It should not be assumed volunteers know how to carry out roles they are assigned to (Little, 1999). Wilson (1983) identified seven key steps in the process of training volunteers, which include: recognizing expectations; assessing learning; determining objectives; developing program content; designing the learning experience; obtaining instructional resources; and conducting the training. This author noted that these concepts can aid in the probability of training success for volunteers.

The opportunities for informing and training volunteers should be motivating to keep these individuals engaged (Wilson, 1983). “We must offer new leadership models for people to consider, and honestly confront old habits and attitudes that are disabling to others” (Wilson, 1983, p. 27). Furthermore, instruction that is hands-on or allows for personal observation can be valuable for keeping volunteers interested in training programs. There are advantages to organizations who provide preparation for their volunteers and these benefits can include creating a positive image in the community, lowering risks and liability concerns, and offering proficiency of services (Fisher & Cole, 1993).

Even though volunteers may be enthusiastic to get involved, if they do not fully grasp the culture and needs of the population they are working with, this can provide detrimental outcomes to the program and/or organization (Myers, Wolfer, & Garland, 2008). These authors went on to explain that it is imperative volunteers are adequately prepared because more damage than good can be done if they are not fully informed of the needs and principles of the organization. This

suggested the idea of looking at who volunteers are when they come to the agency before providing them with individualized training.

Training opportunities must be well-organized and delivered especially today (Wilson, 1983). Adults need to clearly recognize the need (Myers, Wolfer, & Garland, 2008) and their roles for volunteer engagement (Bortree & Waters, 2014). Furthermore, instructional exercises should be flexible, welcoming to diverse audiences, and accommodate varying learning styles (Outlaw, 2015). This author also noted that the idea of providing differing options for engagement so people of diverse lifestyles and preferences can have the likelihood of benefiting can be advantageous to volunteers and the organization. Lamm, Nistler, and Stedman (2012) indicated that leadership teams can be an option for training new leaders and imply this may be a noteworthy point to consider among volunteer leadership development practices.

Like staff members, volunteers have necessities such as receiving sufficient training, being recognized, and having a safe environment to work in with the adequate tools necessary to perform their roles (La Piana & Hayes, 2005). Furthermore, they are looking for non-profits who have a stimulating mission, a good reputation, are effective at what they do, are financially secure, and makes them feel needed and valuable. Continuous training and development can significantly impact the process of engaging and retaining volunteers (Mondy & Noe, 2005). These authors continued to explain that a component of keeping volunteers happy and productive involves asking them frequently what type of education and training will be most valuable to them.

Training for volunteers provides benefits like acquiring new knowledge and skills, personal growth, and opportunities for progression (Fisher & Cole, 1993). Given the lack of availability in community-based non-profits among staff, Woods (2001) supports the necessity

for volunteer leaders to can train and mentor other leaders. Research shows that training enhances volunteer retention, efficiency, and job fulfillment (Outlaw, 2015).

Information such as training and development needs can be obtained by surveying them to be certain their needs are met (Outlaw, 2015). In doing so, this will keep them feeling appreciated and encouraged. This author went on to explain that through inquiring of such necessities whether accomplished formally or informally, volunteers are more likely to remain pleased and constructive, especially if done regularly.

### **Volunteer Placement**

Ideally, volunteers should be placed in positions well matched to their background, skills, and interests (Hybels, 2004). This author continued to explain that it is important to ensure volunteers are filling a role that utilizes their passions. This idea can be conveyed through personal contacts among the administrator and volunteer. However, this is not always the case. Often, the number of people available to assist in different capacities is limited; therefore, volunteers may be called upon to work in areas not preferred (Wideman, 2004). Furthermore, some people have the attitude “I just want to help” or have difficulty saying “no;” therefore, they volunteer to work in positions they otherwise would not get involved in or are not properly matched to their roles.

An idea for placement of unsure volunteers is to allow them to experiment and therefore, not be obligated or believe they need to make a commitment in which they are not confident engaging (Hybels, 2004). Lamm, Nistler, and Stedman (2012) provided indication of the need for leadership teams or others involved in recruiting to be preemptive with getting leaders engaged to sustain them. Sanders (1980) noted that it should be the responsibility of people in leadership roles to do all they can to inspire others to portray leadership characteristics.

Woods (2001) explained that talents of volunteers can provide administrators or leaders with information valuable to volunteer placement; each person has abilities within them they can utilize in various forms. Furthermore, this may encompass new discoveries of gifts or those that have been unattended for some time for different reasons. Wilson (1983) indicated the importance of checking-in with volunteers after placing them in various positions, which can ensure the volunteers are well matched in their roles, have the resources they need, and the opportunity to address any questions or concerns. This author identified points to consider when people have indicated an interest in potential volunteer opportunities and noted that follow-ups should be conducted from volunteer leaders or administrators. This can include an informal interview where the potential volunteer can further explain their interests and the leader or administrator can ask questions for better understanding to assist with placement. This practice makes the individual feel welcome regardless if they are new to the organization or not (Wideman, 2004).

Volunteers appreciate the opportunity to share their input (Hybels, 2004) and feel valued when given the chance to engage in conversation where their input leads to rewarding outcomes (Claxton-Oldfield & Jones, 2012). While follow-ups can be valuable practices during the attempt to place volunteers, it is important that suitable questions are asked and effectual listening occurs. McBee (2002) supported this statement by recognizing that taking the time to listen can be the most significant benefaction of a volunteer administrator and can serve as a form of appreciation.

### **Statement of Research Available**

In the early – mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, volunteers primarily consisted of stay at home mothers and retired people and it was not until later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when more women began working

outside the home and the shift of volunteer occurred (McKee & McKee, 2008). A significant portion of the current literature emphasized the necessity to accommodate the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century volunteer, rather than centering on what has worked well in the past for motivating and retaining volunteers. McKee and McKee (2008) suggested the need for continuously evaluating societal factors and necessities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century volunteer. This assessment is through addressing these potential issues and provisions if such evaluation strategies are not considered and integrated into recruitment and retention practices.

Different to what it may seem, people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century do want to engage in volunteer roles (McKee & McKee, 2008). These authors continued to explain it is more a matter of taking the time to determine what constituents linked to motivation and retention should be considered. Furthermore, marketing and retention strategies need to be tailored to what methods or notions are practical to the targeted population and in this case, high-functioning volunteers. A challenge that volunteer administrators often encounter is assuring the work volunteers provide, contributes to the success of the organization's objectives (Fisher & Cole, 1993).

Social capital which has increasingly abraded over the past two generations may impact the concept of volunteerism, learning, development, and the involvement of potential volunteers through networking and mutual obligations (Putnam, 2000). This author also explained that social movements generate social capital through promoting new identities and spreading social networks. Essentially, people may be drawn to an organization from individuals they know or through other engagements they are involved in. In some instances, such connections may be the only source of a potential volunteer learning of different opportunities in their community. The average American in recent years has been secluded among their communities on a social and physical level, but more involved with people as friends, known as schmoozers rather than as

citizens, identified as matchers (Putnam, 2000). Moreover, people connect in some form with friends twice as often rather than physically attending meetings in their communities and when individuals engage civically, formal methods include political engagements, churches, and coalitions.

### **Applicable Research**

There was an array of research applicable to this study. It is intended this information will help the reader to comprehend constituents pertinent to the motivation and retention of volunteers. This data is projected to be pertinent to various types and sizes of non-profits.

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

“The ability to identify where to find prospective volunteers is at the heart of successful recruitment. If the right people hear your message, you have a good chance of motivating candidates. But if you are trying to sell to the wrong audience, you won’t end up with recruits” (Ellis, 2002, p. 45). McKee and McKee (2008) compared the initial stage of the recruiting process to a first date, which allows people to get a feel for what the organization does and the opportunities available. These authors continued to explain that this informal process helps people develop a sense for what the environment might be like and can provide the possibility of further thought after this preliminary visit and not have to make a commitment. Furthermore, this informal appointment may take place over lunch, coffee, or touring the agency.

If it is applicable for a second meeting, additional details can be provided and the volunteers’ interests, skills, and passions can be disclosed at either visit and it is important to ensure prospective volunteers are not in for any surprises (McKee & McKee, 2008).

Additionally, administrators should be sure to let them know of the information necessary as they potentially begin their new roles and not overwhelm them with data not pertinent to the



success of their current volunteer work. “The purpose of a one-on-one meeting is to cast the vision of the volunteer opportunity. This vision provides a compelling picture of the impact and the experience the potential volunteer would have if they decided to serve” (Hybels, 2004, p. 107). Once people have expressed an interest in volunteering, it is critical to follow through and contact them about placement and/or next steps (Little, 1999).

The most common motivational components used by non-profit organizations to stimulate volunteers are those considered intrinsic (Reinklou & Rosen, 2013). This is because they are not expecting payment for their work and are therefore, more inclined to inherent rewards. “To attract volunteers, meet them where they are” (p. 22) and in doing so and expressing a concern for these individuals’ interests, their aptitudes can be recognized, which is an influential method of expressing gratitude (McBee, 2002).

It is imperative not to overwhelm or provide a negative experience for potential volunteers when attempting to recruit them. Little (1999) noted that opportunities requiring long-term obligations are daunting to volunteers whose time is already limited. This author suggested to begin by asking prospective volunteers to give small blocks of their time before considering them for longer commitments. Additionally, it is important to be cautious of not burning people out (Fisher & Cole, 1993). McKee and McKee (2008) recognized features for consideration when establishing an operational network, which may serve as a potential method for positively attracting volunteers. This includes volunteers who have a passion for the agency; already engaged in a volunteer role; effectively communicates; and someone who is idealistic.

During the initial stages of recruiting volunteers, it is wise to keep in mind that new volunteers are particularly susceptible to dissuasion compared to long-time volunteers and the first impression is critical and should be managed cautiously (Hybels, 2004). Since first

impressions have a lasting effect, how volunteers are welcomed initially will have a long-term impact (McBee, 2002). The following are some ideas for engaging new volunteers (Herrell, 2016):

- ❖ Host events where they can learn more about the organization and ways in which they can get involved
- ❖ Recruit for board or committee position, which can prompt diversity and allow them the opportunity to get engaged more than just donating money
- ❖ Utilize an array of communication outlets and share stories of working being done in organization including pictures and quotes from other volunteers on their experiences
- ❖ Ask young experts to involve their colleagues
- ❖ Offer materials and trainings
- ❖ Be creative (Zwetzig, 2016)

### **Recruiting Materials**

As a component of the recruitment process, addressing items commonly found in a job description may instead be more appropriate to list in a position charter for prospective volunteers and are advantageous for several reasons (McKee & McKee, 2008). This document advocates for a higher commitment level and provides a covenant between the volunteer and organization. Furthermore, this form allows the level of commitment expected to be identifiable. Lastly, the position charter increases the professional appearance of the position and works to make the recruiting process straightforward.

Hybels (2004) validated the importance of providing all necessary details for prospective volunteers – “people need to know their exact responsibilities, when they have to show up,

who's going to be there, and how much time it's going to take" (p. 111). This author also explained that while some of this information is not relevant for a position charter, it should be disclosed to volunteers on an ongoing basis once a commitment has been made. Furthermore, this is especially pertinent as a recruit's resistance is frequently correlated to the limited details they receive. Ellis (2002) explained the importance of being honest with possible volunteers and working to ensure they understand what the responsibilities involve even if it may seem like a lot.

### **Motivation and Retention Components**

For every reason a person volunteers, there is a need associated and to effectively convey gratitude, it is necessary to determine what everyone's distinct need is (McBee, 2002). Everyone "has a button that can be pushed" (p. 22) and the issue is intriguing each potential volunteer so they will become ebullient in a distinct way (Ellis, 2002). These necessities include an agency that has a stimulating mission, has a good reputation, is effective at what it does, is financially secure, and makes them feel needed and valuable (La Piana & Hayes, 2005). A program that successfully attracts and retains volunteers reduces the number of people entering and exiting through a revolving door, saves volunteer leaders from the incessant undertaking of filling roles, and offers gratifying and enduring volunteer experiences (Fisher & Cole, 1993). These authors discussed several factors relating to peoples' motives for volunteering, which included the following:

- ❖ Provides a substitute for employment
- ❖ Serves as a groundwork for employment
- ❖ Presents a reward for displeasing employment
- ❖ Offers opportunities to meet people and build relationships

- ❖ Provides opportunity for personal growth, development, and recognition

Maxwell (1993) addressed factors associated with the motivation of volunteers. When people are involved in creating something, they will support it because they have an investment in the issue, which can be referred to as goal participation. Displeased volunteers are eager or inspired to make an immediate change; also, known as positive dissatisfaction.

“Potential board members, volunteers, and staff who feel their skills and passion will be put to good use will be inclined to contribute their efforts to a successful non-profit, advancing their active participation in the community while benefiting your non-profit and its mission” (LaPiana & Hayes, 2005, p. 42). These authors also discussed that some competitive challenges distinctive to these organizations include the following: community involvement, mission, and public perception. It is essential to keep these elements in mind regarding attracting, motivating, and retaining volunteers.

The following motivates people to engage: significant contributions, goal participation, positive dissatisfaction, recognition, and clear expectations (Maxwell, 1993). People may be interested in volunteering based on altruistic or instrumental motives (Fisher & Cole, 1993). Furthermore, some people are inspired to engage in volunteer roles because of ethical motives such as a desire to help others, religious beliefs, believe it is a social duty, or help themselves feel better. These authors also addressed that others with influential reasons may want to prepare for employment opportunities, better use free time, interact with others, gain experience in a field, or help with displeasing employment issues. They also explained that when volunteers work in an encouraging environment, recognize efforts, and work to maintain positive relationships, they are more likely to remain engaged.

Ellis (2002) listed the following rationales for volunteering:

- ❖ To acquire new knowledge or enhance leadership skills
- ❖ Feel needed
- ❖ Share their skills and knowledge
- ❖ Help others
- ❖ Are new to a community and desire to become more acquainted
- ❖ To feel appreciated or needed
- ❖ Make friends
- ❖ Explore various careers they may later pursue
- ❖ Because someone asked them
- ❖ A substitute form of making financial donations

Maxwell (1993) indicated that the following motivates people to engage in volunteer capacities: significant contributions, goal participation, positive dissatisfaction, recognition, and clear expectations. When it is appropriate for volunteers to assist in recruiting other volunteers, retention can be positively impacted (Hager & Brudney, 2004). Furthermore, when volunteers represent an organization, this indicates trust, a confident organizational culture, and assurance that the agency offers a worthwhile experience for the volunteers. Fisher and Cole (1993) explained that psychological needs can impact a persons' interest and decision to volunteer. An environment can influence the choice to continue volunteering. Hager and Brudney (2004) explained that age can be a factor in volunteer engagement and commitment. They continued to discuss that people under age 24 are known to have lower retention rates and are less likely to sustain relationships compared to older volunteers. Due to the substantial preparation and

consideration associated with a person's decision to volunteer suggests that individual needs are essential foundations of volunteer motivation (Dwyer, et al., 2013).

People engage in volunteer capacities because they care; therefore, it is essential to provide them with opportunities to contribute as much as they can (McBee, 2002). Furthermore, this involves determining where people fit, how their abilities can be put to proper use, and then provide them with the tools needed to adequately perform their roles. Volunteers are more likely to remain engaged when they have the resources needed to successfully perform their position, have a clear understanding of expectations, are interviewed, and reasonably placed in their appointment (Wideman, 2004). Sociodemographic components in addition to personal components are connected to an element of retention (McBride & Lee, 2012).

McKee and McKee (2008) identified three primary categories volunteers' motivation may be associated with, which included the following:

- 1) *The self-serving motivational drive*. This concept relates to people joining an organization because they believe it will fulfill their desires.
- 2) *The relational drive*. This notion involves the idea of individuals becoming involved in volunteer roles to develop friendships.
- 3) *The core motivational drive – their beliefs*. Based on this factor, people choose to engage in volunteer positions related to their beliefs and passions.

Claxton-Oldfield and Claxton-Oldfield (2008) acknowledged several concepts potentially influencing volunteer retention, which included the following:

- ❖ After administering a training, employ volunteers as soon as possible
- ❖ Engage volunteers in trainings
- ❖ Implement a mentoring program for volunteers

- ❖ Host routine volunteer meetings
- ❖ Provide effectual communication
- ❖ Express an authentic interest in the volunteers
- ❖ Include volunteers in newsletters

Unfortunately, factors such as demanding work schedules, longer commutes, and family commitments, often limit the availability people should engage in volunteer positions (La Piana & Hayes, 2005). This concept implied that these individuals pursue opportunities that are flexible and those in which they can achieve a significant amount of work in a short period. Furthermore, they are searching for prospective engagements where they can acquire knowledge experience; utilize their abilities; partake in something that directly impacts them; their family and the community; and do noteworthy and gratifying work (La Piana & Hayes, 2005).

Some volunteer experiences can be damaging for volunteers and take time to change prior views on volunteerism (Hybels, 2004). This concept can significantly impact motivation and retention factors. Such negative involvements can provide people with a sense that volunteerism consists of an obligation rather than a pleasurable undertaking (Hybels, 2004). “Too many willing-hearted volunteers have been wounded ‘on the job.’ They’ve responded to an invitation to serve, only to end up in a volunteer position that was poorly conceived, resulting in tasks that few people would find fulfilling. Or they show up to serve and discover they have nothing to do; an unprepared volunteer coordinator has wasted their time, causing them to lose precious hours they had willingly carved out from their busy schedule” (Hybels, 2004, p. 25). This notion suggested that while these experiences can damper future commitments, volunteer administrators should be mindful of such issues. If possible, supervisors should work towards understanding the basis of such hesitance, especially since rationales can vary from one person to

another. Negative volunteer commitments can influence a person's level of involvement, decision to continue supporting an agency, and desire engage in a position with another organization (Hybels, 2004).

It is also important to consider elements that demotivate people and there are several ideas that can be reflected on to eliminate such issues (Maxwell, 1993). Criticism can be cruel; therefore, it is vital to be sensitive to others and be sure not to hinder a persons' self-esteem and self-confidence. Manipulation can be damaging to the integrity of a relationship. Since volunteers are the key resources to non-profits, it is crucial to ensure they are important and know they are cared for. It is wise to encourage volunteers to try new things and develop new talents, especially if they are engaged in a role that may not be the best fit for them.

McKee and McKee (2008) explained several items necessary for volunteer motivation and retention, which may impact the level of commitment and continued engagement within a community-based non-profit organization. These factors included the following:

- ❖ Help volunteers understand the incentives
- ❖ Allow for regular and continuous feedback from both parties
- ❖ Continuing education opportunities for the volunteers
- ❖ On the job training
- ❖ Open door policy
- ❖ Enjoyable experiences and those that promote accountability
- ❖ Positive and constructive feedback – not an intimidating atmosphere
- ❖ Recognition as a family, not solely on an individual basis

Highly prioritized motivation factors can lead to constructive mental health and encourage people to develop, contribute, and support (Nelson & Quick, 2003). These notions are additional



elements potentially influencing the level of commitment and continual contribution of volunteers.

### **Framework and Approaches Guiding the Study**

There was one framework and two approaches guiding this study. These concepts were projected to help guide the interview and data collection process. The following concepts are addressed further: phenomenology, narrative inquiry, and an empirical approach. These frameworks and approaches were selected based on the researcher's learning in a qualitative research course at Kansas State University, consulting with a methodologist at this institution, and reviewing qualitative reference materials.

#### **Phenomenology**

The theoretical framework guiding the research for this study was phenomenology. Phenomenology involves the science of the knowledge relating to the awareness and the continuity of human experiences (Silverman, 1980). It is anticipated this understanding will provide a more enhanced comprehension of the lived experiences of people among diverse ages and backgrounds who are considered high-functioning in their volunteer engagements. More specifically, because of the meaning transferred through people's experiences, connections, and better understandings of elements associated with volunteer motivation and retention is developed (Grbich, 2013). This author further addressed that not only through the phenomena of phenomenology will others including administrators can acquire a more enhanced comprehension of volunteer motivation and retention, but it is projected this concept will be valuable for volunteers as they develop meaning of their actions and experiences relevant to volunteerism. It is anticipated the phenomenological analysis will help emerge the volunteers' experience into reality with society and the non-profit community. "The meaning of being

human is understood most fully through phenomenological interpretation” (Silverman, 1980, p. 706).

Phenomenology is utilized in fields such as sociology and psychology including the characterization with humanistic methods (Silverman, 1980). Rather than going into the investigation with the idea of why a phenomenon occurs, phenomenology approaches research with the intention of learning more about the specific lived experiences of people (Van Manen, 1990). Another characteristic of phenomenological research this author described comprised the idea the interview stage will be structured and permit the interviewees to offer their experiences while elaborating as they see fit. The natural-like experiences as a component of phenomenology shared through the interviewees’ personal viewpoints offered an attempt to further unfold the literature available and fulfill gaps in the information obtainable as suggested by this author.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

Those who engaged in the interview process had the opportunity to share their story and lived experiences, which relates to narrative inquiry (Kramp, 2004). This practice is the primary method within this study of informing and educating others with a personal approach. “Narrative is a vital human activity that structures experienced and gives it meaning” (Kramp, 2004, p. 104). This process enabled the participants to contribute value and a holistic component to the study (Kramp, 2004) and offer what they are familiar with and who they are (Kim, 2016). This method contributed real-life information from volunteers considered high-functioning by their supervisors to support the study. The researcher allowed the narrators to share their experiences without interrupting with questions and being a good listener, but rather with nonverbal behaviors of interest so they could effectively share their story (Kim, 2016). Through

the idea of storytelling, the participants could share their narratives beyond individual experiences as discussed by this author.

Through each of the interview questions as a guide, the participants provided their viewpoints and engagements, which supported the research question for this study. Upon collection of the interview information, an analysis of the narratives was determined and themes were integrated into this research. The meaningful experiences offered during this reflection and story process supported the focus of the examination and enlighten others in the field, thus hopefully filling a gap in the literature. Additionally, the narrative inquiry component allowed for a method of knowing for the participant and researcher, which was conveyed through the story element (Kramp, 2004). The hope is this process was valuable for the interviewees as they had the opportunity to conserve their memories, trigger their ideas, create a linkage with the past and present, and potentially visualize their future as addressed by this author.

### **Empirical Approach**

This qualitative study primarily involved an empirical approach because of the selected methodology of interviewing high-functioning volunteers. An empirical method was a valuable method to employ as it allows for advancing the viewpoints of people (Lopucki, 2015) managing and working with volunteers who choose to read the study. The hope is these individuals will discover methods through the interview findings in which they can enhance the motivation and retention of volunteers they work with thus improving their programs and organizations. It is anticipated these real-life outlooks offered best practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> century volunteer non-profit program. It is expected this enrichment of perspectives was attained through the following:

- ❖ Diversified representation of volunteers interviewed from a variety of organizations and potential roles

- Included volunteers of varying ages and backgrounds.
- ❖ Varying perspectives offered as responses to each of the interview questions and any additional information the respondents shared

### **Gap, Implications, and Directions for Further Research**

“The non-profit sector is traditionally an understudied sector in the literature” (McMurray, Pirola-Marlo, Sarros, & Islam, 2009, p. 437). Research specifically connecting to the motivation and retention of high-functioning volunteers and more explicitly what gets them there and what makes them stay is scarce. The literature available on volunteerism and the motivation and retention of volunteers provides multiple connections associated with this study. This gap not only validated the need for this study, but also allowed those who are considered high-functioning volunteers to provide their perspectives and experiences relevant to this investigation during the interview process.

The hope is the interview method provided implications valuable to the work of administrators of community-based non-profits motivating and retaining volunteers. Additionally, it is anticipated this method will assist volunteer managers in better understanding what attracts these unpaid workers to the agency and volunteer role and what makes them stay. The lived experiences and viewpoints collected from this study will provide evidence that will expand the current literature on the motivation and retention of volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations (Karwalajtys, et al., 2009). Because of the significance of volunteers working in these agencies today, the significance of fulfilling this gap in the literature was adequately supported.

There are limited studies that have examined how the fluctuating attributes of volunteer work are related to results (Myers, Wolfer, & Garland, 2008). It appears that research on

organizations of varying sizes and comparisons among factors associated to volunteer motivation and retention can be valuable and may help in better understanding issues that arise. Additional research on this subject can fill gaps in the literature and provide better understandings without having to piece together the data available that mostly focuses on volunteerism in general.

### **Summary**

Although, the literature focuses on many elements associated with the motivation and retention of volunteers and not specifically on unpaid individuals who are considered high-functioning or in some cases, not precisely referenced to non-profits, there are many connections. The array of material presented provides an extensive overview of the elements linked to attracting, satisfying, and keeping volunteers engaged. The correlations discovered in the literature to this study can be integrated into community-based non-profit programs. Because high-functioning volunteers have the potential to enlighten volunteer programs, this notion supported the need for examining this cohort through the interview stage of the study. This concept offered a comprehensive analysis of this area of volunteerism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

This study addressed the gap of data as supported through the literature review concerning the motivation and retention of high-functioning adult volunteers among community-based non-profit organizations. The methodology was qualitative with a purposeful sampling technique and approach through the process of conducting interviews with a population of non-profits containing a Denver address and examining the information collected. The participants could respond based on more than one current volunteer role and/or organization they are engaged in. The notion of establishing relationships with volunteers can aid in the collaboration of working towards achieving common goals, which is possible when volunteers are placed in fitting roles (Fisher & Cole, 1993). The following sections are addressed in this chapter:

- ❖ Research design
- ❖ Researcher identity, positioning, and background
- ❖ Research demographics and explanation for study location
- ❖ Selection
- ❖ Interview questions
- ❖ Sample size, control, and data collection and management
- ❖ Analytic procedures and variables
- ❖ Evaluating the research and potential issues
- ❖ Trustworthiness and confirmability
- ❖ Protection of human rights

### **Research Design**

Several methodologies were assessed when designing this research. The selection of a qualitative study with an interview process was selected because it appeared appropriate based

on the purpose and goals of this investigation. Furthermore, because of the researcher's familiarity with conducting interviews through the preliminary study, which is further addressed in this chapter, this research method appeared appropriate. Essentially, what the investigator learned from the preliminary study, which is further addressed in this chapter; helped shaped the methodology for this examination. The interview "becomes a unique form of discourse between two people where one is an informed leader who is there to learn more about another's experiences or series of experiences, views, or perspectives, or reactions to a particular phenomenon or event" (deMarrais & Lapan [of Chapter 4], 2004, p. 55). This research design allowed for an in-depth examination and was open and supportive to the intricacy of the interviews for the investigation (Flick, 2014).

### **Rationale for Qualitative Methodology**

"Unlike quantitative research, qualitative methods take the researcher's communication with the field and its members as an explicit part of knowledge instead of deeming it an intervening variable" (Flick, 2014, p. 17). The researcher was most comfortable with this decision as it allowed participants to offer their perspectives on a personal level. The interviewees could speak about their experiences, viewpoints, and practices as they addressed each semi-structured question. The concepts shared were analyzed and integrated accordingly into the study. The semi-structured questions (refer to appendix A), also known as open-ended (Flick, 2014) allowed each respondent to elaborate as they feel needed, which is not always possible with a survey or questionnaire. The researcher assumed that an initial impression of an electronic questionnaire or survey may be bothersome and not of importance to some people. It was found that the chosen methodology allowed for diverse themes and those that connected in some forms to other individuals' responses.

A constituent of the qualitative methodology involved the process of the researcher hearing verbal data and offered more of a personal touch by asking the participants for their input during the interview session (Flick, 2014). It appeared this concept helped them feel valued and permitted for insight to be shared on what is happening in the field as noted by this author. The interview questions addressed the research question and served as a representative of the direction taken during the interview.

### **Benefits of Utilizing Qualitative Methodology**

Because qualitative research pertains to the examination of social relations (Flick, 2014), this method appeared relevant to the focus of this study. The following statement pertaining to qualitative research related well and provided support to the context and focal point of this study. “Rapid social change and the resulting diversification of life worlds increasingly confront social researchers with new social contexts and perspectives” (Flick, 2014, p. 12). This concept was pertinent to the study because of the diverse experiences and viewpoints volunteers bring to non-profit organizations (Bortree & Waters, 2014). Furthermore, it is intended these backgrounds and viewpoints will offer significant enlightenment to those working with and managing volunteers and provide information to improve their roles in volunteerism.

### **Researcher Identity, Positioning, and Background**

This section was intended to serve as the researcher disclosure; to outline and address the researcher’s biases and stance on the focus of this study, in addition to factors contributing to their interest in this topic. Based on observations as a key leader, administrator, and volunteer in a community-based non-profit entity, the need to have others involved in leadership position and carry out other volunteer roles besides the administrator is imperative. This concept suggested the need for having skilled and confident volunteers in the organization who can work



collaboratively with the staff members. In many cases, the idea of having volunteers capable of serving as leaders themselves is valuable to community-based programs, especially in cases where staff members are limited.

### **Overview of Preliminary Study**

My internship experience interviewing professionals in administrator roles among various community non-profits led to my desire to better understand the motivation and retention of volunteers and served as the preliminary study for this project. The focus of this research was leadership development in non-profits and entailed a qualitative study interviewing 13 volunteer managers who represented 12 different entities in Manhattan, Kansas. The success of the chosen methodology used during the internship helped build reliability of the instruments used for the research design of the dissertation.

While presenting the internship experience to my doctoral committee, I realized it would be beneficial to examine the perspectives of volunteers to gain knowledge helpful to administrators as it pertains to motivation and retention. Both studies complemented one another. I will contact the preliminary study participants to make them aware of the completed dissertation research.

During the preliminary study experience, I learned that while the subject matter of the internship and data collected was valuable, the volunteers' voices need to be heard to provide an environment where their needs are met and they can be successful. I especially believe this based on some of the items addressed in the Statement of Researcher's Prior Beliefs (refer to appendix F). Further information on what led to the area of focus for the internship can be found in the Personal Reflection of Relevant Lived Experiences (see appendix G).

I am familiar with strategies volunteer administrators implement to promote successful practices. This research and observations have helped me gain a better understanding of volunteer needs to provide effectual frameworks with leadership development. I worked from a subjectivist perspective because I connected my prior experiences and observations to the study and from which I expanded upon as I interviewed volunteers.

I know through my doctoral studies, internship experience, and ongoing research, strategies volunteer leaders and administrators implement to promote successful practices. This process has helped me gain a better understanding of needs through varying perspectives to provide effectual frameworks with leadership development. Additionally, I acquired this familiarity through my work with volunteers and serving in numerous volunteer roles myself.

### **Significance of Prior Experiences and Observations**

I identify myself based on my values and experiences, which in some regards is shaped by my upbringing. Additionally, I am a person who thrives on working with and helping people discover their strengths and abilities to succeed in various capacities, regardless if this pertains to a career position or volunteering their gifts and time. I have an extensive familiarity of non-profits, which was relevant to this research.

My non-profit interest stems from personal engagements as a volunteer, administrator, and coordinator in a variety of forms in this sector. A significant amount of my professional background connects with non-profits. In holding positions as a volunteer and staff member in these organizations, I have developed not only a passion for these types of agencies, but also the field of volunteerism.

My desire to help others and serve the local community, in addition to my interest in developing my own non-profit became more defined through life situations and the data

collection phase during the research process. Prior to these circumstances, I knew I wanted to pursue an entrepreneur opportunity in the non-profit arena, but the exact focus was not entirely clear until experiencing such experiences. These ideas have helped shaped my research interest through developing relationships and working with people among an array of backgrounds and community-based non-profit organizations. Furthermore, I have realized the abundance of attributes people bring to volunteer roles, which is influenced through my roles as a volunteer, member of community organizations, and work as staff member in various capacities.

Based on my experiences and observations, this notion stimulated the interest in examining constituents impacting the motivation and retention of adult volunteers that contributes to the success of community-based non-profit organizations. I aspired to enhance the community through understanding the relations and differences high-functioning adult volunteers engaged in non-profit agencies and providing this analysis to volunteer administrators. The relationships, observations, and experiences I have encountered have helped me discover my passion of leadership and program development in community-based non-profit organizations. I believe this learning acquired during my work with adult volunteers aided to this study as I understand the multitude of elements associated with volunteerism in community-based non-profit organizations.

Through my experiences, the willingness and enthusiasm to do the same work you as an administrator would ask volunteers to do is key. Additionally, creating more of a team atmosphere is essential. I am an avid believer of the following statement. “Get involved in the process by doing the actual jobs of the people concerned and see what problems arise” (p. 91), which can lead to influence, a major element of leadership (Maxwell, 1993).

## **Researcher Positioning Disadvantage**

It was initially thought that one disadvantage of my position with the study might include my lack of experience with a multitude of community-based non-profit organizations. Fortunately, this did not appear to be an issue for the researcher. This issue was addressed and enhanced through the multitude of research analyzed for this study and conducting interviews with an array of non-profit entities in the community.

## **Research Demographics and Explanation for Study Location**

There was extensive information pertaining to the location for this study, the population, and participants. This material was intended to detail what the demographic location, culture, and age of the potential volunteers looked like. The justification for pursuing the data collection process in Denver is noted in the Rationale and Relevance of Demographic Location sub-section.

### **Study Demographics**

The study was conducted in Denver, Colorado. Denver is in Denver County, holds the nickname “Mile High City,” and is the capital of Colorado. Denver is “the fastest growing major city in the United States” (p. 1) with a population of 600,158 people and 285,797 households per the 2010 census (Wikipedia, 2016 c). This source also indicated that the city encompasses a 500-mile radius. The racial makeup for Denver in the 2010 census includes 68.9% White, 10.2% African American, 1.4% Native American, 3.4% Asian, 0.1% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 31.8% Hispanic or Latino, and 9.2% other race (Wikipedia, 2016 c). While Bortree and Waters (2014) noted that the ethnic background of volunteers can impact their engagement, this did not appear to be the case in this study. Per the 2010 census, the population consisted of the following (Wikipedia, 2016 c):

- ❖ 22% under age 18

- ❖ 10.7% ages 18-24
- ❖ 36.1% ages 25-44
- ❖ 20.0% ages 45-64
- ❖ 11.3% age 65 and older
- ❖ Median age 33
- ❖ For every 100 females, 102.1 males

Of all cities in the United States, Denver is considered the most educated (Home to Denver, 2016). This reference also noted that Denver has been known as the cultural, shopping, and entertainment capital of the region for over 125 years.

### **Rationale and Relevance of Demographic Location**

Participants for the study were drawn from Denver, Colorado because of the researcher's access to interview people. Because of the multitude and array of community-based non-profit organizations in Denver, the research analyzed and data collected can be applicable to other geographic locations. This concept is especially possible since the study provided information in general form and was not specifically connected to factors only pertinent in Denver.

### **Selection**

The Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract (IRS, 2016) included records of all exempt and 501c3 non-profits separated by each of the 50 states in the United States and was used as the basis from which the participants were drawn beginning April 2016. Each entity was listed in order of the Employer Identification Number (EIN) and varied in size, type, and purpose. From this record, a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet of all Colorado non-profits was generated. The researcher then condensed this list to only contain agencies with a Denver address, which generated 4,917 listings. The researcher then proceeded with use of the random

number generator process for the initial selection procedure of selecting non-profits or the strata to be represented in the study.

The Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract seemed most appropriate based on searches the researcher conducted on non-profit organization listings. It was the researchers' sense going into the study that the organizations listed on this directory contained volunteers in their programs based on their personal experiences and knowledge of non-profits. The information concerning reaching the potential participants will be addressed further.

### **Overview of Random Selection Process**

The random number generator system was conducted to produce a list or strata from [http: www.psychicscience.org/random.aspx](http://www.psychicscience.org/random.aspx). Once a shortened list of non-profits was developed during each selection approach, the researcher used this spreadsheet to document all correspondence with representatives associated with the organization throughout the entire data collection process. This practice was implemented for the initial selection method and the revised system of contacting potential non-profits to represent the study, which is discussed further in the following sub-section.

Initially, 50 organizations were randomly selected from the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract to represent a sufficient number of volunteers in this study. This report available from the IRS, provided an individual Microsoft Excel spreadsheet report for all 50 states in the United States with a listing of all exempt and 501c3 non-profit organizations. Of the 50 non-profits initially selected, it was intended that one participant would represent 15-20 organizations. When the desired participant yield was not accomplished, the same approach was generated as a second round of the random selection process. The researcher assumed that

because many non-profits rely on volunteers that securing commitment from administrators to assist with the study would not be an issue.

### **Update to Selection Method of Data Collection Process**

During the initial random selection process, only one organization followed through with agreeing to assist with the study. This contact generated two face-to-face interviews. Because the researcher made the decision to modify the selection approach after two unsuccessful random selection processes, transcripts were not generated from these two interviews. The researcher did not integrate the findings from these interviews into the research; however, the information gathered from these sessions was helpful in the researcher's learning of the study focus area.

The second round of the random selection process began after making contacts with all organizations selected during the first round and moving forward accordingly after allowing the time given for response to conclude. Because of the low response and participation rate during the first round of the random selection process, there became a need for conducting a second round of this process. The same tactic was administered during the second round of the random selection process as was utilized for the first round. The master list 4,917 non-profits were randomized a second time to generate a listing of 49 entities through the random selection generator used with the first round since one organization previously produced two interviews.

If repeat organizations were selected, additional non-profits were chosen using the initial process. The researcher assumed that one week was sufficient time for a representative with the agency to respond regardless of the method of delivery. The second round of the random selection process did not generate any interviews. It was found that some organizations do not encompass staff members and are solely operated by volunteers or only have volunteers as their board of directors. The researcher continued selecting possible participants through the random

selection generator process from the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract until two unsuccessful rounds were conducted and a revised approach was then established.

Representatives from a total of 99 different organizations were contacted from the two random selection phases.

In consultation with the researcher's major professor, the decision was made to alter the approach to the selection method or sampling component of the project. This revision was because of little to no response after attempts to identify participants from both random selection rounds. A modification to this approach deemed necessary to continue moving forward with the research in a more practical manner. Rather than continuing to randomly select participants, the researcher proceeded forward identifying the sample by targeting non-profits likely to contain active volunteer programs and potentially a volunteer manager. This process was conducted until an adequate representation of organizations and participants was received. This revision to the selection process proved to be a more direct approach and allowed the data collection stage of the research to progress more steadily and successfully.

When modification to the data collection approach was established, contact was made with the individuals who the researcher already corresponded with to thank them for their interest and to inform that the study was currently being reviewed for possible changes. Furthermore, the researcher shared that they may be in contact with them in the future. Additionally, the two individuals who were interviewed during the first round of the selection process were contacted to thank them for their participation and notify of the modification to the data collection process. They were also informed that while their input was helpful in the learning of the subject matter for the researcher, that data they provided would not be integrated into the study.



Organizations contacted during this alternative sampling approach were contacted in order of listing on the initial listing from the IRS. This modified selection process encompassed the researcher reviewing the IRS listing of 4,917 non-profits and selecting the organizations likely to have a volunteer program and an individual responsible for supervising volunteers. Once the master list was condensed to only consist of organizations or others likely to have a volunteer program and volunteer administrator based on the researcher's familiarity of these agencies, each non-profit was further explored through performing a Google search. After narrowing this list, the first 10 organizations with probable volunteer programs and an individual in a volunteer supervisory role were contacted.

The researcher referred to a women's leadership social networking group in Denver she was acquainted with. The purpose of this group is to provide support for other women leaders in the Denver community. After the researcher composed a message on their Facebook page about the project, several recommendations of non-profits in Denver with volunteer programs were received. Some of these organizations the investigator already noted to contact on the condensed list from the IRS. Other organizations were indicated on the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract, but not on the shortened list the researcher developed as the investigator was not aware of contained volunteer programs. If a recommended agency did not encompass a Denver address or was not listed on the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract, the organization was not further explored.

Additional non-profits from the condensed list were contacted as necessary. This occurred so that a total of 10 organizations and 10-20 interviews/participants were represented in the study. The method remained the same for how the volunteers were contacted as was discussed for the random selection process.

In general, the feedback and willingness to assist from the administrators and volunteers was positive. For the most part, all organizations on the condensed list, contained active volunteer programs. The shortened list the researcher formulated was fairly accurate relating to those anticipated to have volunteer programs after researching and reviewing the website for each of these organizations. Overall, the participants were eager to engage in the study and appeared to enjoy the interview session.

Overall, the revised approach to selecting the organization to invite their assistance with the study progressed at a more rapid and forward pace compared to the initial approach. The same form of communication was utilized with the revised selection method as was implemented during the initial process. Due to the challenge in making connections with organizations and the desire to successfully move forward in a timely manner, the decision was made to interview 1-2 people per entity. The researcher believed that the 10 non-profits and 18 interviews with different individuals represented for the study would yield the information needed for the study and well-explore the research topic, which was the case because of the interview quality. If this was not achieved, additional organizations would have been inquired as needed.

### **Participant Criteria**

The population encompassed volunteers among various community-based non-profit organizations with a Denver, Colorado address. The inclusion factors included the notion that the interview participants needed to meet certain criteria through purposeful qualitative sampling. These individuals were to be considered high-functioning adult volunteers by the administrators overseeing their work. The definition of high-functioning for the administrators of these non-profits may differ from one organization to another based on their interpretations; therefore, this meaning may vary from what is indicated in Chapter 1. The researcher provided a

definition of high-functioning in the administrator contact letter to be helpful in their decision making and selection process (refer to appendix B).

Because it was up to the volunteer administrators to determine who they deem as high-functioning, the individuals they chose as potential participants and criteria for such selection varied from organization to organization. The variations were seen in the volunteer backgrounds, number of years involved, level of expertise, commitment, and enthusiasm. After the administrators agreed to assist with the study, they were asked about the criteria they used for identifying the high-functioning volunteers in their organization. This information is included in the Participant Information table of Chapter 4. Additional omission standards encompassed the idea that some organizations containing active volunteer programs may have been missed from potentially representing this study because it was up to the researcher to make this determination.

### **Administrator Contacts**

Once the spreadsheet was developed, the researcher contacted the volunteer managers or administrators of the selected organizations for a list of adult volunteers they consider high-functioning in their roles. The researcher performed a Google search of each organization to determine who their staff member was likely to oversee volunteers and contact information for sending the administrator contact letter (see appendix B).

There were some instances in which representatives with the non-profits who the initial letter (see appendix B) was sent to, did not respond, but did so with the follow-up message (refer to appendix B) or not at all. In these cases, additional information as needed was sent to these individuals as necessary. There were some organizations in which a letter was mailed via USPS, the letters were returned and noted as undeliverable. Letters were only mailed to the organizations containing a mailing address available on the Exempt Organizations Business

Master File Extract or online. Some non-profits only had an electronic form available on the agency's website to complete for general inquiries rather than direct email addresses for staff members.

During the process of establishing initial contacts, the researcher found that of the organizations that had a website, the identification of those who may manage volunteers was not always clear. In some instances, general inquiries were sent to the organizations' director, president, or central email address to be directed to the appropriate person who could assist with identifying adult high-functioning volunteers among their agency. After receiving a reply from someone affiliated with the organization directing the researcher to the appropriate contact person after sending a message through an electronic form on their website or an email, the complete detailed letter (refer to appendix B) was sent accordingly.

Throughout the initial selection approach or the process of random selection, many of the non-profits did not have staff members listed on their website who appeared to be involved in supervisory roles of volunteers. In the instances where the staff members listed on the non-profit's website did not contain volunteer coordinator, manager, administrator in their job title, the researcher identified who to contact from each organization based on an educated guess while reviewing these organization's website. If organization did not have a website, the researcher assumed this entity did not have a volunteer program.

The researcher was surprised by the number of organizations who did not have a website listed through Google searches and those who did not list the volunteer manager on their website. The researcher was also astounded by the number of organizations who did not have a volunteer manager or administrator clearly identified on their website. In these instances, a message was sent accordingly to the organization requesting they direct the researcher to the appropriate staff

or contact person if they are not able to assist. Some agencies were found to only have an address and phone number listed or just an address whether indicated on their website or on the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract.

The mailing address listed on the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract and the contact information through performing Google searches was not consistent and/or accurate for some of the non-profits. This problem included that in some cases only a mailing address and phone number, solely a phone number, or a main email address to the agency was listed. In some instances, the mailing address found on the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract was not comparable to the address found on the non-profit's website or through the Google search listing. Generally, a phone number was listed, but not in all cases, especially if an email address was available. Some organizations did not have a correct phone number or any further contact information aside from a mailing address listed as a Google search or on their website and in some instances, no mailing address or website was available to verify contact information.

The investigator determined that the most efficient method of contacting administrators or other representatives of the selected non-profits was via email. Extensive searching through each organization's website was performed to locate an email address of the person who may be able to assist with the study. The researcher used their judgment to determine who this individual might be that supervises volunteers based on experience in the non-profit sector. If limited email addresses were available on the agency's website, a message was sent to the email address available.

The administrator contact letter (refer to appendix B) was emailed if an email address was attainable, otherwise the document was mailed via the United States Postal Service. In some

cases, this information was not available online other than a phone number, in which the researcher attempted making a phone call to inform of the study. The process requested of the volunteer administrators involved a preliminary screening for each manager to develop a list of who they consider high-functioning volunteers with their agency. These individuals were provided with a summary, the aim of the study, and invitation to send the researcher a list of adult volunteers who they consider high-functioning in their organization (refer to appendix B).

Of the agencies initially contacted with the invitation letter, a second letter was sent (refer to appendix B). If no response was made after the researcher made contacts with representatives of the selected organizations, a follow-up message was sent accordingly (refer to appendix B). The other methods of communication as needed included a letter (refer to appendix B) via the United States Postal Service or a phone call. In instances where a phone number was listed, a phone call inquiry as a follow-up was made to the organization after an initial letter was sent via the USPS (refer to appendix B). Initially, the potential participating organizations were given an extended period to respond with their interest and availability before sending a follow-up letter (refer to appendix B). This time ranged from 1-5 weeks.

During the revised selection method, the representatives of the non-profits who received the request to assist with the study were provided one week to respond before a follow-up was made. After a second contact was made with these individuals, an additional week was given before eliminating the agency from the study. Because of the low response and participation rate during the first round of the random selection process, there became a need for conducting a second round of this process.

## **Potential Participant Contacts**

The researcher contacted the volunteers identified from the representatives associated with each selected organization inviting them to participate in the study (refer to appendix C). In instances where the organizations contacted indicated they have a protocol with providing volunteer contact information to people not affiliated with the organization, the investigator forwarded the administrator a copy of the participant letter (refer to appendix C). These individuals then sent the information from the researcher to their volunteers and asked the potential participants to contact the researcher directly.

As each non-profit was responsible for identifying who they consider high-functioning adult volunteers, the number of those identified from the volunteer administrator or other representative from the organization, varied of the contributing organizations. This number ranged from 2-4 people who were suggested from the non-profit representatives that responded to the researcher's request. This figure was undetermined in some instances. The rationale for this idea is because there were instances where the staff members of the non-profits insisted on contacting the potential participants themselves and asking them to contact the researcher directly. In other situations, administrators provided the researcher with a list of individuals to potentially participate.

Of the volunteers' names and contact information shared with the researcher, the investigator contacted these individuals two at a time if applicable by email. If more than two names were provided from the administrators, the first two individuals were contacted. If interviews were secured with these two people, the others were not asked to participate in the study, but were informed that the participant number from their organization was filled. If an interview with each of the first two individuals was not arranged, the researcher contacted the

other volunteers accordingly until 1-2 interviews were conducted from each organization whose administrator agreed to assist. After waiting approximately one week after the initial contact was made with each volunteer suggested, a follow-up message was sent (refer to appendix C) before another volunteer was contacted from the same organization if applicable. The researcher contacted the administrators of these non-profits as needed for additional potential participants.

The potential participants were provided with an overview and the intention of the project and asked to participate in the study. The following information was included in the letter (see appendix C):

- ❖ An introduction of the researcher
- ❖ Purpose and overview of the research
- ❖ Explanation of how the data will be used
- ❖ Confidentiality and privacy protection information for each participant and how this will be strictly managed through the entire research process
- ❖ Timeline for completing the data collection

Each participant was provided with the Informed Consent Form (refer to appendix D) outlining the risks and benefits of participating in the study (Flick, 2014). The interviewees were asked to sign this form prior to participating in the study. This document helped elude potential harm to participants by valuing and taking into consideration their needs and passions and this process referred to code of ethics, which are conveyed to control the relationships to the people and arenas they aim to examine (Flick, 2014). Once each person was provided agreement to participate in the study, an interview was scheduled accordingly based on their availability. The interview site was flexible to help the participants feel comfortable.



Upon agreeing to participate, the results from everyone did not have direct connection to a specific organization, but rather a general type. The participants had the opportunity to provide a fictitious name for file management purposes only. This information was only available to the transcriptionist and the research was used to keep the data organized, not to document in the study.

### **Eliminations from the Study**

Organizations were eliminated from the study based on the following issues:

- ❖ Non-profits' information found on the IRS list did not accurately correspond with the organizations' title indicated when the researcher performed a Google search
- ❖ Those who did not have a website, a volunteer program identified, contain an active volunteer pool, or are no longer an operative organization
- ❖ Did not respond to the volunteer administrator or potential participant initial and second request (follow-up) to participate
  - This notion also applied to the situations where an initial interest was indicated from the administrator and no further response was received even after a follow-up message was sent from the researcher.
- ❖ If no reply was received one week after completing an online form for general inquiries, as no complete contact information was available for a follow-up message
- ❖ Phone number was not available to call for a follow-up as a second request when not receiving a response from the initial mailed letter
- ❖ When phone messages were left as a follow-up and no response was received within one week

- ❖ Did not contain accurate contact information or in the instances where the letters were returned to the researcher and unsuccessful phone call attempts were made
- ❖ Other agencies were not available to participate for various reasons expressed to the researcher and were eliminated from the selection process immediately after learning of the following concepts:
  - Are newly established
  - Undergoing staff transitions and do not have time to participate
  - Do not have people who fit the criteria as potential participants or a sufficient number of people interested in participating
  - Simply not able to or interested in assisting with the study at the time of request
  - Others provided no explanation for not choosing to participate

Before eliminating the organizations, when making decisions about the time period process of contacting the administrators or other representatives of the non-profits, the researcher assumed if immediate responses were not received, more than likely they were not interested in participating.

### **Interview Questions**

There were 15 semi-structured interview questions. The questions inquired served as a representative of the direction taken during the interview process. They were in no way inclusive of other ideas or commentary that may transpire. These questions were intended to serve as a guide and were mostly open-ended. The interview questions included an assessment of “the practices and interactions of the subjects in everyday life” (Flick, 2014, p. 15). “Because each participant is unique” (p. 53), open-ended questions can allow for an overall distinctive

experience for qualitative research involving interviews (deMarrais & Lapan [of Chapter 4], 2004), which was the case in this study. Interview questions five and eight related directly to the research question. The remaining 13 questions were inquired because the researcher believed this information would be valuable to the study.

### **Summary of Interview Process**

While the 18 participants were given the option to participate face-to-face or electronically, the preference for the researcher and many of these individuals was to meet in person, which was the case for 10 of the interviews. The location for the face-to-face interviews varied, but were typically held at coffee shops or similar restaurant environments except for the one that was held in a participants' home and another at the non-profit the interviewee represented. Six of the 18 interviews were conducted via Zoom due to the availability of the participant or researcher and two were held via phone because of interviewee availability. Each interview session ranged from 30-40 minutes depending on the depth of the responses provided. The data collected during the interview sessions was based on the responses received from each participant. The interviews offered varying feedback from adults of diverse backgrounds, volunteer roles, and organizations.

While the interviews were structured, the respondents had the opportunity to share their story through the process of narrative inquiry beyond the set of questions if they chose. Through autoethnography and an ethnographic perspective on personal lived experiences, the researcher could understand larger social matters (Bochner, 2012 cited in Kim, 2016). This process also allowed for the narratives to produce expressive, available, and suggestive research (Kim, 2016) that is anticipated to help administrators better comprehend the volunteers they are working with.

The researcher worked to ensure through the interview guide (refer to appendix A) that all questions were answered for each interviewee to allow for an appropriate comparative analysis. This approach also permitted the researcher the opportunity to ask follow-up questions as needed for clarification. The participants were encouraged to respond as they desired about the questions and not feel limited (Reinklou & Rosen, 2013). The participants were not required to address any questions they were not comfortable with, which was not a factor in this study. Each respondent was notified prior to the start of the interview about the tape recording and the researcher did not proceed until interviewee approval was obtained in writing.

A non-strict verbatim transcript for each interview was developed from Landmark Associates Incorporated and provided to the researcher. The researcher took notes during the interviews to serve as a back-up in case there were issues with the recording process. This concept was valuable because in some instances, the researcher had to use the notes they compiled due to recording problems. In these instances, no official transcripts were created from the transcription company. The researcher attempted using Windows Live Movie Maker, but this was unsuccessful. As an alternative, Zoom was used for recording purposes regardless if the interview was conducted face-to-face or executed through Zoom. For the most part this was successful. However, there were instances when the Wi-Fi connection in the public meeting places appeared to be an issue. In these situations, the researcher referred to the notes collected during the meeting and any portions of the audio recording as applicable. With such circumstances, even partial recordings were submitted to the transcriptionist. For such interviews, the participants viewed and approved the notes composed from the investigator and the transcript from the recording. The researcher then integrated this information accordingly into the study.

The total duration of the data collection process was eight months. The interviewees were provided five days to respond by approving the transcript or interview notes before the researcher sent them a follow up email. Each participant received a hand-written thank you card from the researcher upon completion of the interview process. The opportunity for debriefing will be accomplished by sending each participant and administrator from all the non-profit organizations represented in this study, a digest of the key elements found in the research.

### **Sample Size, Control, and Data Collection and Management**

There were several factors pertinent to the sample and data collection process for this study. It is anticipated this information elucidates the selection process and how the material shared during the interviews was managed. Through the selection process, it was expected that a diverse representation of non-profits would be represented in the study, which is shown in Chapter 4 through the findings.

### **Summary of Data Collection and Management Process**

Upon approval from each interviewee, the interview sessions were recorded and served as the source of the transcriptionists' work. It was anticipated that shortly after beginning the interview, each participant disremembered about the audio tape recording and the discussion occurred unaffectedly even if these experienced possible uncomfortable stages (Flick, 2014). The interviewees were offered an alternative if they did not agree to the recorded interview, which was to include handwritten notes only; however, there were no instances in which the participants chose for the interviews not to be recorded.

The transcribed recordings allowed for a solid database of the analysis (Flick, 2014). The data collected was reviewed individually by the researcher and transcriptionist and then a transcript of the collected data was formulated and organized for each participant and provided to

the investigator. The researcher delivered electronic files of the interviews to the transcriptionist so they could provide a non-strict verbatim transcript. Furthermore, the researcher was in full control of the project and worked to ensure adequate and diverse feedback was received.

### **Analytic Procedures and Variables**

The data from the interviews was categorized by key concepts and supporting ideas and examined to help make sense of the material as suggested by Flick (2014), which is addressed further in Chapter 4. Once the practice of coding was completed, elucidations could be made to comprehend what information had been discovered about the perspectives on the research topic and the connections among the interviewees. The interview phase served as a method to support the overall research analysis. Upon collecting the data from the interviews, trends were determined from the findings and incorporated into the research analysis. Variables potentially impacting the interview questions are addressed further.

### **Variables Impacting Interview Responses**

There may be several variables that impacted the feedback offered to this study. This concept helped contribute to a diversified research examination. Based on the investigators' speculations, some of these factors may include:

- ❖ Level of education, employment background, and experiences.
- ❖ Number of years engaged in a volunteer position
- ❖ Type of organization involved in
- ❖ Familiarity of volunteerism
- ❖ Personal beliefs relating to initial volunteer engagement
- ❖ Rationales for staying engaged in general within a non-profit and/or within one organization compared to another

Each of these elements may have impacted the level of depth the interviewees provide in their responses.

### **Evaluating the Research and Potential Issues**

Upon conducting the interviews, the researcher developed an extensive analysis of the findings. The following are matters discovered during the interview process:

- ❖ Some interviewees had less experience in volunteer roles compared to others even though they were considered high-functioning by the administrators supervising their work.
- ❖ The level of depth to the responses varied.

### **Trustworthiness and Confirmability**

The researcher worked to help the potential participants build trust that the interview process is legitimate. This was accomplished through making this information clear to the potential participants during overview of the study was provided before people participated. A disclosure about the interview process (refer to appendix A, C, and D) was also included for those interested and selected to partake in this stage. This summary also included information regarding confidentiality and how this would be strictly maintained throughout the entire research process. Each participant was asked prior to the start of the interview if they consented to the recording of the session and their signature was documented accordingly before proceeding (refer to appendix A and E). If the interview was conducted in person, the participant signed the Interview Worksheet for Volunteer Participants (see appendix A) for consent of recording the conversation. If this meeting was held via Zoom or phone, the interviewee signed the Recording Authorization for Volunteer Participants (as found in appendix E) for recording approval.

As an incentive for partaking in the interview, upon completion of the data collection process, all 18 participants were entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Amazon. The random selection generator process used during the initial selection of organizations to participate was utilized for choosing the gift recipient. The gift certificate was emailed to the participant accordingly.

### **Acquiring Trust**

The idea of gaining the trust of the readers for this research project was attained through integrating information from the volunteers themselves during the interview process into the study. This method also allowed those currently involved in volunteer roles to share their perspectives that supported the research analysis and permitted the participants and other readers the opportunity to understand where the research or analysis stems from. A more enhanced comprehension of the material through those associated with community-based non-profit organizations may then be more likely.

### **Member Checks**

Member checks were conducted through the interview process. This included an opportunity for the participants to expand on their responses and share their story if they desired, in addition to approving their commentary. The member checks were attained by each interviewee through the transcription process. This practice encompassed verifying and approving the transcript of the data collected from them before their ideas were integrated into the study. Any adjustments of information transcribed was modified as needed. This notion expressed respect and concern for the participants and confirmed the findings (Kramp, 2004). The interview data was gathered through transcription of recorded material and any additional notes the researcher composed.



### **Protection of Human Rights**

A high level of confidentiality was maintained throughout the entire study. The approval for this research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kansas State University before collecting data (refer to appendix H). Additionally, permission was acquired from each interview participant through the Informed Consent Form (see appendix D) before participating in the study.

The initial contact information for each potential interview candidate was received from the administrator of the organization in which the volunteer was associated with and delivered to the researcher. In some instances, instead of disclosing potential participant contact information to the researcher, the volunteer administrators contacted the potential participants due to their preference and/or organization policy. The researcher and transcriptionist were the only individuals with access to the respondents' information offered during the interviews. The researcher notated this material accordingly and stored accordingly with the participants' actual names for record keeping purposes only, which was maintained confidentially. Each interviewee had the opportunity to provide a fictitious name with the information they offered during the interview session. Names of specific organizations collected during the interview process were not identified in this study. Rather, types of non-profit agencies were referenced when addressing the findings from the interview sessions.

### **Summary**

This qualitative study employed a purposeful sampling technique through the process of conducting interviews. Community-based non-profit organizations in Denver, Colorado were randomly selected from the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract to assist in providing the researcher a list of volunteers they view as high-functioning. After each person

agreed to participate in the study, an interview appointment was established based on their availability and location preference. A series of semi-structured questions were addressed to help guide the session for each interviewee to share their viewpoints and any additional remarks were encouraged. Upon completion of each meeting, the transcript was approved by the participants before being published and integrated accordingly through the researcher's interpretations of the data collected. It is intended that the chosen methodology and interview environment was appropriate and allowed for authentic viewpoints to be shared, which effectively supported the focus of the study.

## **Chapter 4 - Presentation and Analysis of Data**

This chapter will discuss what occurred throughout the data collection process based on Chapter 3. In general, this phase was time consuming including contacting organizations, securing administrators agreeing to help find volunteers, attempting to contact the potential participants, and arranging interviews with the volunteers themselves. The researcher found some variances in the dynamics between the interviews conducted face-to-face compared to those administered electronically and via phone. It is inevitable that the in-person sessions allowed for an engaging and personal dialogue between the researcher and participant; however, this also applied to the interviews conducted via Zoom. As for the two phone interviews, while these discussions contributed valuable information to the study, they were not as enticing compared to the other meetings.

Overall, the number of interviewees working versus those who are retired, ages, backgrounds, and number of years volunteering was diverse even though there was a greater number of females interviewed compared to males. There were two instances where husband and wife teams were interviewed together. For the most part, the commentary in these situations was comparable to each spouse and the input provided was extensive because of the two participants addressing each question during the session, rather than one person. This notion adds to the differing outlooks and information shared during the interview stage of the research. These figures are addressed in the Representation of Participants section of this chapter.

Of the organizations who are represented in the study, in general, the administrators who the researcher made contacts with appeared to be eager to assist. Overall, the participants seemed to enjoy the opportunity to participate in the study and for the most part, offered in-depth feedback to each interview question the researcher inquired. Some of these individuals

commented what an honor it was to partake in the study and indicated an interest in learning the results of the study. The information obtained during the interview process of this study is addressed in this chapter through the following sections: the key observations during both selection approaches and methods for addressing; representation of the participants; analysis identified from the themes; and findings from the interview participants.

### **Key Observations during both Selection Approaches and Methods for Addressing**

Overall, the researcher was surprised by the number of organizations contacted who never replied. It was initially anticipated there would be more organizations excited about a partnership like opportunity where the researcher, non-profit, and participant could benefit. The investigator found that many non-profit operate with little to no volunteers and/or contain only a board of directors.

### **Representation of Participants**

The data referenced in the table below represents an array of different types of organizations containing a Denver, Colorado address. The criteria used for identifying the adult high-functioning volunteers provided for the study was inquired by the researcher at the time of receiving the interest response from the administrator or in a follow-up email. The size of the non-profits noted in the table below was an assessment the researcher made based on observations gathered when initially researching the organization to be potentially included in the study and interpretations collected during the interview process. It was discovered that many of the participants did not have formal titles with their volunteer positions.

The table below lists information collected or observed from the researcher during the data collection process. This data includes gender; career status; individual or husband and wife team; years volunteering in general and with organization representing for this study; title and

description of position; organization type, size, and function; interview, recording, and transcription method; criteria administrator used for selection; and title of person supervising volunteers. The career status included either working or retired versus a complete awareness if full-time or part-time. The number of years volunteering and title and description of position was a question inquired of the participants on the Interview Worksheet for Volunteer Participants (refer to appendix A). The organization's type, size, and function was determined by an assessment the researcher made through review of the non-profits' information on their website. The criteria the administrators used for selecting the participants was inquired by the researcher during the initial contacts made with these managers.

**Table 2: Participant Information**

<b>Overview of the basic data provided below</b>	<u>Gender</u> <i>Males - 6; Females – 14</i> (includes two husband/wife teams, which were treated as one participant/interview for each team) <u>Career status</u> Working - 8; Retired – 5; Semi-retired – 1; Not working – 1; Unknown – 2 <u>Individual interview sessions</u> - 16 <u>Husband and wife team interview sessions</u> - 2 <u>Organization size</u> <i>Small-scale - 8; Medium-scale - 4; Large-scale - 6</i> <u>Interview method</u> <i>Face-to-face - 10; Zoom - 6; Phone – 2</i>
<b>Participant</b>	A
<b>Gender</b>	Male

<b>Career status</b>	Working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	32 years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Three years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Community liaison – meets with people in the community who may be a good fit for the organization to collaborate with, builds relationships with agencies that have similar purposes, and spends some time with the clientele this non-profit serves.
<b>Organization type</b>	Serves children in need
<b>Size</b>	Small-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Provides items for children in need
<b>Interview method</b>	Zoom
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording – Zoom Transcription - Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The volunteers selected by the administrator are individuals who are considered reliable, been volunteering for more than one year with the organization, and are exceedingly engaged in their volunteer role - supporting this non-profit and the work the agency does.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Executive director

<b>Participant</b>	B
<b>Gender</b>	Male and female
<b>Career status</b>	Both are retired
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Husband and wife
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	Husband – 25 years Wife – 15 years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Both for two years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	No formal title - in babysitting infants who are part of one family on a twice per month basis
<b>Organization type</b>	Helps homeless people
<b>Size</b>	Medium-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Provides people with resources to get out of homelessness
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Researcher notes due to recording issue
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	This includes people who have volunteered for a year and some for several years. These individuals are considered “go to” volunteers, are self-sufficient in their roles and do not require micro-managing, are involved in multiple capacities, are part of the community, and have relationships with the clients this organization serves.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Volunteer coordinator

<b>Participant</b>	C
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	36 years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Two years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Volunteer as needed – babysit for families, prepare meals, purchase supplies for clients
<b>Organization type</b>	Helps homeless people
<b>Size</b>	Medium-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Provides people with resources to get out of homelessness
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Researcher notes due to recording issue
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	This includes people who have volunteered for a year and some for several years. These individuals are considered “go to” volunteers, are self-sufficient in their roles and do not require micro-managing, are involved in multiple capacities, are part of the community, and have relationships with the clients this organization serves.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Volunteer coordinator



<b>Participant</b>	D
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Retired
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	40+ years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	17 years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Board member – no formal description – do what is needed, which includes doing the newsletter, run errands for the organization, take animals to the veterinarian, and care for animals and the facility as needed.
<b>Organization type</b>	Animal rescue
<b>Size</b>	Small-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Shelter for animals
<b>Interview method</b>	Zoom
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording – Zoom Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	These individuals require nominal micro-managing if at all.  Both people were trained, which indicates they do not require extensive experience in the type of services our organization offers. One person brings a solid background in administration and editorial skills. She assists with the organization's

	newsletter and develops it with limited direction. Additionally, she has good judgment and intuition of time of when information should be distributed. The other individual takes initiatives, thinks well, and exercises good judgment. Both people are very intelligent, trainable, interested in helping, observes all rules, careful in their roles, trustworthy, and do not request others to do things. These individuals are the primary volunteers within the organization. The executive director keeps requests of these volunteers at a minimum.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Executive director
<b>Participant</b>	E
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Career status</b>	Working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	Five years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	One and a half years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Youth mentor – work with youth and helping them with educational opportunities
<b>Organization type</b>	Youth development
<b>Size</b>	Medium-scale

<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Helping youth by providing them with educational and community opportunities
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording – Recorder Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	Inquired with other staff members about mentors who have been rockstars and dedicated in their roles. This list encompasses volunteers who have not been recently asked to do something similar to this project. The staff member then contacted these individuals, which included a combination of males and females.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Vice president of programs
<b>Participant</b>	F
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Retired
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	13 years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	13 years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	No formal title – do any work that is directed by the executive director; assist with animal rescue efforts and provide support

	for fundraisers
<b>Organization type</b>	Animal rescue
<b>Size</b>	Small-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Shelter for animals
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Researcher notes due to recording issue
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	<p>These individuals require nominal micro-managing if at all.</p> <p>Both people were trained, which indicates they do not require extensive experience in the type of services our organization offers. One person brings a solid background in administration and editorial skills. She assists with the organization's newsletter and develops it with limited direction. Additionally, she has good judgment and intuition of time of when information should be distributed. The other individual takes initiatives, thinks well, and exercises good judgment. Both people are very intelligent, trainable, interested in helping, observes all rules, careful in their roles, trustworthy, and do not request others to do things. These individuals are the primary volunteers within the organization. The executive director keeps requests of these volunteers at a minimum.</p>
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Executive director

<b>Participant</b>	G
<b>Gender</b>	Male and female
<b>Career status</b>	Working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Husband and wife
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	Husband - 10 years Wife – volunteering since 9-10 years old
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Both 10 years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Volunteer where needed, which includes assisting with events and fundraisers, in addition to serving on a committee and helping with monthly support group
<b>Organization type</b>	Awareness for medical condition
<b>Size</b>	Small-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Provide support and education
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording – Zoom for questions 1-7 and researcher notes for questions 7-15 due to recording issue Transcription – Landmark Associates for questions 1-7
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	These volunteers were selected because of the number of hours and years they have devoted, in addition to a deep devotion and passion for the organization. Furthermore, these individuals have used their volunteering experience as a method of healing from their personal life experience relevant to the organization.

<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Executive director and educator
<b>Participant</b>	H
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	16 years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	16 years and six years in current higher-level position
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Coach – lead groups; manage, train, and supports volunteers in similar roles who are also affiliated with the organization in other location
<b>Organization type</b>	Support for parents
<b>Size</b>	Large-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Helps meet needs of parents
<b>Interview method</b>	Zoom
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Zoom Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	These individuals are considered the highest-level volunteer in the organization, are exceedingly motivated and self-starters, work well independently, and incessantly search for ways to

	<p>grow the group they are working with and progress the organization onward.</p> <p>Primary strengths and talents of the volunteer staff:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrates a high level of integrity, confidentiality and character</li> <li>2. Professionalism when dealing with anyone inside or outside the organization</li> <li>3. An effective communicator with strong verbal and written skills</li> <li>4. A team player with the aptitude to take initiative, anticipate needs, and collaborate with others on their team in an appropriate manner</li> <li>5. Self-motivated with the ability to work independently to achieve personal and team goals.</li> <li>6. Understands and supports the vision and purpose of the organization</li> <li>7. Must have access to the internet, email, files, Microsoft Word and Excel.</li> </ol> <p>(Volunteer manager for participant H, Personal communication, October 18, 2016)</p>
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Volunteer manager

<b>Participant</b>	I
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	22 years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	22 years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	On board of directors and serve on several committees including one for fundraisers
<b>Organization type</b>	Awareness for medical condition
<b>Size</b>	Small-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Provide support and education
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Recorder Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	These volunteers were selected because of the number of hours and years they have devoted, in addition to a deep devotion and passion for the organization. Furthermore, these individuals have used their volunteering experience as a method of healing from their personal life experience relevant to the organization.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Executive director and educator



<b>Participant</b>	J
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Unknown
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	Most of life
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Five or six years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	No formal title – helps with events and serves on committee
<b>Organization type</b>	Medical condition awareness
<b>Size</b>	Small-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Support, education, and awareness for medical condition
<b>Interview method</b>	Zoom
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Zoom Transcription - Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The individuals suggested volunteer not only for our annual events and/or a monthly support group, but also serve on committees for the larger annual events.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Community outreach coordinator
<b>Participant</b>	K
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Retired

<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	51 years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Five years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Care partner representative – serves on committees and organizes walk fundraiser for the organization
<b>Organization type</b>	Medical condition awareness
<b>Size</b>	Small-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Support, education, and awareness for medical condition
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Researcher notes due to recording issue
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The individuals suggested volunteer not only for our annual events and/or a monthly support group, but also serve on committees for the larger annual events.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Community outreach coordinator
<b>Participant</b>	L
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Career status</b>	Working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	5-6 years total
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Four years

<b>Title of position and description</b>	Board member – pick-up items from collection site for children and work with family and people in the community
<b>Organization type</b>	Serves children in need
<b>Size</b>	Small-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Provides items for children in need
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Researcher notes due to recording issue for first five questions and Zoom for the remaining questions  Transcription - Landmark Associates for questions 6-15
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The volunteers selected by the administrator are individuals who are considered reliable, been volunteering for more than one year with the organization, and are exceedingly engaged in their volunteer role - supporting this non-profit and the work the agency does.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Executive director
<b>Participant</b>	M
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Unknown
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	20 years

<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Five years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Have been involved in several volunteer roles with this organization, which include helping with special events where needed and serving as the team lead and engaging and assisting clientele
<b>Organization type</b>	Museum
<b>Size</b>	Large-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Education
<b>Interview method</b>	Zoom
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Zoom Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The volunteers suggested are those who have had a vested interest in the museum and the mission. These individuals are dedicated, delightful to work with, and willing to work in many capacities.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Manager of volunteer services
<b>Participant</b>	N
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Not working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual

<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	35 years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	One year
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Membership assistant – enter new museum memberships; verify contact information for community partners; assist with special events
<b>Organization type</b>	Museum
<b>Size</b>	Large-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Education
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Recorder Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The volunteers suggested are those who have had a vested interest in the museum and the mission. These individuals are dedicated, delightful to work with, and willing to work in many capacities.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Manager of volunteer services
<b>Participant</b>	O
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Retired
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual

<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	Two years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Two years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	No formal title – greets and checks in clients and sets-up appointments for them
<b>Organization type</b>	Health
<b>Size</b>	Large-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Health related services
<b>Interview method</b>	Phone
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Recorder Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The following are the factors involved in selecting the volunteers from this organization: dependability including the response time or how engaged they area, offer a high quality of volunteer work, and if these individuals have ever provided constructive criticism.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Volunteer services manager
<b>Participant</b>	P
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Working
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual

<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	Always have volunteered in some context
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Two years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Mentor – work with youth on various life aspects and education
<b>Organization type</b>	Youth development
<b>Size</b>	Medium-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Helping youth by providing them with educational and community opportunities
<b>Interview method</b>	Phone
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - recorder Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	Inquired with other staff members about mentors who have been rockstars and dedicated in their roles. This list encompasses volunteers who have not been recently asked to do something similar to this project. The staff member then contacted these individuals, which included a combination of males and females.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Vice president of programs
<b>Participant</b>	Q
<b>Gender</b>	Female
<b>Career status</b>	Retired

<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	Seven years
<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	Four years
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Volunteer healthcare specialist
<b>Organization type</b>	Provide services for people in need
<b>Size</b>	Large scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	After fulfilling needs of people, goal is for them to be more self-sufficient
<b>Interview method</b>	Zoom
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Zoom Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The volunteers suggested for this study are those who have volunteered six months or greater and are highly dedicated and faithful in volunteering.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Director of volunteer services
<b>Participant</b>	R
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Career status</b>	Semi-retired
<b>Individual or husband and wife team</b>	Individual
<b>Years volunteering (in general)</b>	20 years, but not consecutively



<b>Years volunteering (with organization representing for study)</b>	One year
<b>Title of position and description</b>	Handyman – fulfill home improvement needs of clients the organization serves
<b>Organization type</b>	Health
<b>Size</b>	Large-scale
<b>Non-profit primary function</b>	Health related services
<b>Interview method</b>	Face-to-face
<b>Method of recording and transcription</b>	Recording - Recorder Transcription – Landmark Associates
<b>Criteria person supervising volunteers used for identifying the volunteer</b>	The following are the factors involved in selecting the volunteers from this organization: dependability including the response time or how engaged they area, offer a high quality of volunteer work, and if these individuals have ever provided constructive criticism.
<b>Title of person supervising volunteers</b>	Volunteer services manager

### **Analysis Identified from the Themes**

The interview questions referenced below addressed the research question for this study – *What factors attract high-functioning adult volunteers to engage in community-based non-profits and what makes them stay with an organization?* The information provided below encompasses a summary of the ideas collected from these two interview questions asked of the participants. The researcher found similarities and differences in the responses gathered. Further data related to these inquiries below is addressed in the Participant Information table of this chapter.

*Tell me about what attracts you to volunteering in your local community and the specific organization(s) you are involved in.*

When it comes to attracting people to donate their time, energy, and skills in a non-profit setting, the idea of giving back, offering meaningful work or services, and helping and empowering others in their local community is appealing. Furthermore, compassion for others and the cause of the organization, in addition to being passionate about the agency offers is enticing to volunteers. The concept of achieving accomplishments, the opportunity to learn, feeling appreciated, personal connections, making a difference, and networking draws people to donate their time in a non-profit setting.

*Please elaborate more on what motivates you to not only get involved in a specific role or agency, but also remain engaged with the position or organization? (Internally/externally motivation factors).*

People are motivated to get involved in volunteer roles and specific organizations because of personal connections they may have, commitment of organizations, and the desire to connect and network in their communities. Others are drawn to these positions and non-profits because of their background, skills, enjoy the type of work involved in, aspiration to make a difference in the lives of others, and outcomes offered by the organization. The choice to remain engaged with a volunteer roles and non-profit involves several factors, such as the people they are working with, feeling supported, making a difference, and that the time volunteers donate is appreciated and respected.

The following includes summaries from each interview question the researcher asked the participants for this study. Each inquiry from the interview sessions is worthy of addressing whether they pertain directly to the research question or not, as information was gathered that is

applicable and valuable insight to this study. While there was some comparison in the interview responses from the participants, there were significant variances, which the researcher found very pleasing through the coding process. Additional data connected with all the interview questions are addressed further in the Participant Information table of this chapter.

*Tell me about your experience volunteering in the community and the services you provide to your role as a volunteer. Please feel free to base your commentary on one or more roles and/or organizations you are involved with.*

It is clear the volunteers are passionate about their roles and involvement with the organization they represented for the purposes of this study. For the most part, these individuals do not expect rewards in return for their volunteer work. These people do however, appreciate recognition. Some of the participants referenced the difficulty they experience in saying “no” even if tasks are needed or asked of them or if they have little interest in participating.

As implied in the data collected during the interview process, adult volunteers come from numerous backgrounds in which impacts their role and engagement in volunteerism capacities. Some of the individuals are involved in or have been engaged with several non-profits and volunteer positions presently or in the past, while others are solely participating in the agency representing for the purposes of this study. Several participants have been volunteering in some capacity for much of their life.

*Briefly explain the make-up of the organization you volunteer with.*

The participants represent non-profit organizations who have a board of directors, volunteers, an executive director, and other staff members including a volunteer administrator, coordinator, or manager. While in many instances, the organizations represented in this study have a staff member whose primary role is supervising the volunteer programs. Depending on

the structure and size of the non-profit, there are several agencies in which the executive director is involved in managing volunteers. Some organizations have limited employees, while others have multiple staff. In some agencies, there are limited staff compared to others and some consist of a combination of full-time and part-time employees. Some of the participants for this study serve on the board of directors. For the most part, the interviewees are engaged in their volunteer role on-going rather than on an episodic or one-time basis.

*How did you find out about your volunteer position and how were you recruited?*

Many of the participants were not directly recruited in their role, but rather more inadvertently led to the positions they have. Some became involved because of a personal connection or a form of interest in what the non-profit offers. Other individuals' engagement emerged from a friend already connected with the organization or through their own personal searching, such as through online reviews. In other instances, participants were drawn to their volunteer role through life experiences pertaining to the services the agency provides.

*Tell me about your thoughts on volunteer motivation and retention. In your opinion, what factors impact concepts relating to engagement and commitment in community-based non-profit organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of high-functioning volunteers? What do you believe makes them stay with an organization?*

Numerous participants spoke to the need for volunteers to be dedicated and passionate about the cause of the organization they are collaborating with and the work they provide in their volunteer positions. For volunteers to continue being committed to their role, it is imperative these individuals are passionate, know the efforts they are providing are valuable, they are making a difference, and appreciated. For those who are retired, connecting with volunteer

opportunities allows them to not only be engaged in their community, but offer their time and skills they are no longer providing in their careers.

*What skills are most necessary in your volunteer role and why?*

Adult volunteers have skills, expertise, and passions that should effectively be utilized to help retain them. It is important to not assume all volunteers are similar – each are unique and need to be placed in roles where they are likely to succeed. Because adult volunteers are distinctive as this study implies and have much to offer due to differing backgrounds, there is a plethora of skills represented in this study that allow many non-profits to be successful. The volunteers in this study validate that all adults have something to offer the realm of volunteerism.

*Please explain what you believe to be the greatest strength a volunteer can bring to an organization.*

Because volunteers are unpaid, dedication to their role and organization they are working with is a key factor pertaining to the most significant strength they can contribute to a non-profit. Additionally, there are other components such as compassion and passion that were consistently addressed during the interview sessions. Rather than commenting on one strong point, several participants noted more than one attribute they found to be noteworthy for volunteers to offer in their efforts to a non-profit. Some of these attributes include enthusiasm, motivation, time, believing in what the volunteer is doing, commitment, dependability, compassion, and being able to connect with the clientele served

*Briefly discuss how your organization works to motivate and retain volunteers. Do you believe improvement in these processes is necessary? If so, why?*

From the pool of non-profits represented in this study, there is an array of methods in which volunteers are motivated and retained with the organizations they represent. The most

common factor found in this research relates to events held for honoring and appreciating volunteers. This is also an opportunity where volunteers can network with others. Furthermore, staff members who take the time to personally thank their volunteers goes a long way and in many cases, helps volunteers validate why they are doing what they do and want to continue doing so. It is imperative volunteers' work is recognized and whether they see the value for themselves or not, others notice their contributions and effort to the organization and greater community.

This study found that a primary component in motivating and retaining volunteers is ensuring these individuals are placed in positions where they can function well. An aspect relating to this notion on more of an on-going basis is checking in with volunteers throughout their tenure with the organization. In doing so, volunteers can offer their feedback whether this pertains to their individual role, the program or department they are working in, or the agency. This idea can serve as an informal evaluation tool, but at the same time let the volunteers know or remind them that their input matter, they are important, and their time, energy, and efforts is valued and needed

Participants in this study commented on the importance of volunteer administrators taking the time to listen to their volunteers. All of which was drawn from the data collection process as elements impacting the motivation and retention of volunteers in community-based non-profits. Improvement was suggested in the following forms:

- ❖ Methods of the organization being able to help more people
- ❖ For the volunteer recruiting process
- ❖ In finding forms or opportunities for volunteers to collaborate with other volunteers
- ❖ Establishing connections for the volunteers

❖ Improvement was suggested as an on-going necessity from some participants

*Does your organization have an evaluation system in place where you are able to share your viewpoints on the program or organization as a whole? If so, please briefly explain.*

Most the organizations represented in this study do not have formal systems in place where volunteers evaluate the program they are working with or the non-profit. Rather, these individuals' feedback is welcome on an on-going or as applicable basis and initiated on an individual level. While in some cases, surveys have been administered, it appears they have not generally been extensive. There are some participants who noted that they have received emails from the staff member responsible for supervising volunteers, which served as an evaluation tool. Another method indicated in the interview process includes the use of wrap-up sessions after events to gain insight on items that worked well and what can be improved.

*Briefly discuss your expectations for volunteer administrators you are working with.*

The expectations for the administrators the participants are working with vary and involve several factors that were identified in this study. The idea of knowing and understanding the volunteers, managers, and coordinators a volunteer is working with is important. This involves an awareness of their skills and background and best utilizing these factors. Other elements, such as supporting and guiding the volunteer experience and being respectful of the volunteers' time is deemed noteworthy. Periodic check-ins with volunteers can ensure they are pleased and their needs are successfully being met.

*Do you feel appreciated in your volunteer role? Please explain.*

Overall, the participants represented in this study feel appreciated most of the time in their volunteer roles. Many individuals commented that while feeling appreciated is important to their involvement and continued engagement, they do not need tangible rewards for their

accomplishments. Rather, the personal thank you's, such as verbally, hand written via email and newsletters, and recognition they receive often at events is enough. They are not necessarily to for doing the work they are contributing to for incentives and credit as they are engaged in non-paid work. However, because these individuals are donating their time and talent, it is important that they are valued and know that not only they are making a difference, but that it is valued by others. It may otherwise be difficult for them to justify their involvement and time they could instead offer elsewhere in the community.

*What do you find most challenging as a volunteer?*

The concept of time and the idea of motivating others is a challenge for some of the participants for this study. This encompasses organizing their time with the work they do among the organization and the clients they help serve. Other interviewees noted how they wish they had more availability to volunteer with the agency they represent for this study because they are so passionate about what they do.

*Please describe the most rewarding elements of being a volunteer.*

It is evident from the interviews conducted that the participants are very passionate about the work they are engaged in with the non-profits they represent and therefore, feel good about what they are doing. The researcher discovered from these volunteers that it is important to maintain win-win circumstances, help others, share new ideas, and know that their efforts will make a difference. These individuals enjoy helping others in the community through their role, acquiring new skills, interacting with and meeting new people, the opportunity to recognize accomplishments, support the clientele, and playing a role in items of value that have transpired.



*Do you have any additional insight you want to share concerning the topic of volunteer motivation and retention in community non-profit organizations?*

The individuals interviewed for this study shared a plethora of additional insight not inquired by the researcher. This question was addressed by most of the participants and in general, encompassed positive feedback. The concepts provided were wide-ranging and significantly varied with each volunteer. Several participants shared ideas based on and relevant to their experience in volunteer capacities. While others offered broader perspectives on the topic of volunteer motivation and retention in community-based non-profits. More specifically, some commentary implied that because the time volunteers have is valuable, it should be used wisely and that if the work involves making a difference, these individuals will continue donating their time and efforts to the cause. However, it is important these people are respected, have flexibility, know they are making a difference, and do not become overworked in their position with the non-profit.

### **Coding Process**

Through the practice of open coding the data as suggested by Flick (2014), the researcher examined and analyzed the results by hand from each interview session in relevance to the investigation to identify themes and ideas. The first round of coding was accomplished through the following steps:

- ❖ Analyzing each of the 18 transcripts and coding them one at a time
  - This practice was dependent on paradigmatic cognition, “a thinking skill that we humans primarily use to organize experiences as ordered and consistent while attending to its general features and common categories and characteristics” (Kim, 2016, p. 196).

- ❖ Identifying key concepts from each transcript that anchored from the responses and highlighting these ideas (Saldana, 2015) in pink
  - What was considered a main idea was the researcher's discretion.
  - Any related ideas to these thoughts were highlighted in green, which included further information to support the main idea (Flick, 2014) and was also assessed by the researcher's decision.
- ❖ Integrating the highlighted ideas from each transcript as a synopsis into outline form as suggested by Uncomplicated Reviews of Educational Research Methods (2016), which is seen in the Summary of Participant Responses table noted below as they correlated with each interview question
  - The common themes could then be obtained from the extensive outline in this table based on the number of times the ideas were indicated.
    - If a concept and any connected ideas linked with each interview question was notated three or more times, it was categorized as a common theme.
  - Then any remaining key notions and supporting ideas listed on two or fewer occasions was recognized as an "additional idea" in the Summary of Participant Responses table.

The second round of coding as suggested by Saldana (2015) was attained through comparing participant responses and verifying common themes, related data, and additional ideas, which was the source of information for the overall synopsis of the study.

The process of frame analysis was another form of explaining the coding segment of this study and was successfully attained by establishing frames around the interview transcripts,

categorizing frames into groups, and designating them as noted below (Grbich, 2013).

Furthermore, as this author implied, through coding, the concept of segmentation to identify themes and keywords from the participants' responses and then organize these ideas through sorting the data appeared appropriate for this study. Like Grbich (2013) explained, this information was then used to better understand the findings.

### **Findings from the Interview Participants**

The table below represents an overview of the responses received for each question addressed during the interview process.

**Table 3: Summary of Participant Responses**

<b>Interview question</b>	<b>Participant responses</b>
1) Tell me about your experience volunteering in the community and the services you provide to your role as a volunteer. Please feel free to base your commentary on one or more roles and/or organizations you are involved with.	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Attracted to non-profit because of interest in the clientele served</li><li>❖ Engaged in other community volunteer roles aside from organization representing in this study</li><li>❖ Other engagements relate work performed with the non-profit representing for this study</li></ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Overall, amazing experience in community as a volunteer<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Enjoyable</li><li>○ Good feeling</li></ul></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Know helping and of service</li> <li>❖ Engaged in volunteer role because of situation experienced personally relating to cause of organization</li> <li>❖ Carry a business card for volunteer role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Helps build credibility</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Volunteer experience centers around an area of healthcare for the past 35 years</li> <li>❖ Volunteer experience also encompasses international work</li> <li>❖ Discovered current volunteer role through another organization</li> <li>❖ Typically, been engaged in activities centered around children and their families</li> <li>❖ Because of prior work experience in non-profit sector, became educated and about the organizations sought to volunteer with</li> <li>❖ Provide students with opportunities they may not experience otherwise</li> <li>❖ Get to know a lot of people through volunteer engagement, some of which are lifetime friends</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Experience includes fundraising support, disaster relief, caring for animals, and assisting with animal rescue situations</li> <li>❖ Position developed over the years</li> </ul>
2) Briefly explain the make-up of the organization you volunteer with.	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Volunteer program is significantly large</li> <li>❖ Organization consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Executive director</li> <li>○ Board of directors</li> <li>○ Volunteers</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Organization consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Paid employees</li> <li>○ Members</li> <li>○ Small non-profit with one staff person</li> <li>○ Founder</li> <li>○ Part-time staff</li> <li>○ Volunteer coordinator</li> <li>○ Counselors</li> <li>○ Case managers</li> <li>○ Mentors</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Encompass internal programs that help keep the organization going</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Different levels of volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Some serve on committees, are leaders of groups, assist with events, are mentors, and/or go out in the community to pick-up and deliver items the organization works to serve or distribute</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Clientele enter through a program with the organization to help them overcome problems</li> <li>❖ Case managers who provide a connection between internal and external functions of the organization</li> <li>❖ Services offered are at various locations in community</li> <li>❖ Everyone has defined roles; however, people assist others as needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employees are treated equally, which is attractive for one volunteer</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Facility designed to offer patrons a learning experience</li> <li>❖ Provide services to people experiencing homelessness and transition</li> </ul>
3) How did you find out about your volunteer	Some of the common themes included the following:

<p>position and how were you recruited?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Approached organization with interest in helping</li> <li>❖ Networking and through a friend already involved with organization</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Opportunity evolved from a situation relevant to the services the organization offers that the volunteer experienced</li> <li>❖ Find the efforts of executive director imperative and happy to a part of this</li> <li>❖ Did research to find a good fit</li> <li>❖ Already involved in the organization</li> <li>❖ Flyer</li> <li>❖ Created their own volunteer position</li> <li>❖ Came to an event the organization was hosting</li> <li>❖ Story told by executive director</li> <li>❖ Discovered event committee</li> <li>❖ Volunteer opportunity became a partnership</li> <li>❖ Through the need to help a family member</li> <li>❖ While participating in a small group at church</li> <li>❖ Love the age demographic of the clientele served</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Newspaper article brought awareness of the organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Article talked about executive director and stories about services the organization has offered</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Through monetary donations made <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Impressed with prompt thank you note that was given and decided to volunteer</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Always felt valued by executive director and believe in what they do</li> <li>❖ Feel self-centered if do not volunteer</li> </ul>
<p>4) Tell me about your thoughts on volunteer motivation and retention. In your opinion, what factors impact concepts relating to engagement and commitment in community-based non-profit organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of high-functioning volunteers? What do you believe makes them stay with an organization?</p>	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Important to engage volunteers in activities significant and valuable to the organization</li> <li>❖ Personal experience impacts volunteer motivation and retention, which may involve an issue or event they have encountered</li> <li>❖ People engage because they have a passion for working with the type of clientele the organization serves and the agency itself, are compassionate, have the time to do so, financial resources, possess talents and experience that can be utilized, can identify a need in their</li> </ul>



	<p>community, and the aspiration to play a role in a community</p> <p>❖ People remain engaged in a volunteer role based on the following ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have resources they need</li> <li>○ Recognize positive impacts being made</li> <li>○ Skills are being utilized and enhanced and they are significantly contributing to the organization as a whole</li> <li>○ Are passionate about their work and have good relationships with the people they are working with</li> <li>○ Know they are making a difference in the lives of others and the community</li> <li>○ People have limited time; therefore, it is important that their efforts are valued and not spent on attending meetings or office type work that does not contribute considerably to the programs they are working with</li> <li>○ Activities are fun, meaningful, overall experience is positive, have an interest in the niche the organization offers,</li> </ul>
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	<p>experience is flexible, and can engage in a role they may not otherwise be able to partake in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appreciation and dedication are shown - thank you notes go a long way</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ People should have a personal connection to the organization before they get involved as a volunteer</li> <li>❖ Issue of availability and other obligations can impact engagement and commitment</li> <li>❖ Volunteers are engaged because they choose to be</li> <li>❖ Opportunity to network to benefit career and collaborate with others who have similar interests, passions, and experiences</li> <li>❖ Purpose/services non-profits offer impact the engagement and commitment of volunteers</li> <li>❖ Purpose/services non-profits offer impact the engagement and commitment of volunteers</li> <li>❖ Vital to have a healthy environment where the employees are happy and work effectively with others</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Dedication to the organizations' cause is necessary</li> <li>❖ Varies for different people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ May encompass social, professional, or peer pressure related motives</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Training is essential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Volunteers need to be trained well and know what is expected of them</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Definition of what a volunteer is and what makes them effective has faded</li> <li>❖ Discovering an opportunity that speaks to people</li> <li>❖ Engage to acquire a skill to help others</li> <li>❖ Willingness to help if there is a need they can fulfill</li> <li>❖ Utilize and share their God given gifts</li> <li>❖ Feeling good about the opportunity engaging in and searching for new experiences to pursue</li> <li>❖ As a volunteer, expect to be challenged and be involved in tasks and opportunities would not otherwise have</li> <li>❖ An outreach program must be involved</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Volunteer engagement relates to interconnected relationships</li> <li>❖ Opportunity to give back <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Especially when no longer working</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ People want to get involved or help in various forms when they learn of devastating situations or they choose to not think about it</li> <li>❖ For those who have been on the receiving side of volunteering – this can lead to searching for a volunteer position they can relate to and are passionate about</li> <li>❖ People in charge within the organization need to be able to successfully cast the vision to help motivate the volunteers</li> <li>❖ People sometimes volunteer out of guilt</li> <li>❖ Have difficulty saying “no” or think there is no one else to fulfill the role or complete the task</li> <li>❖ How organization is structured – good at listening to volunteers and effectively administering their input to upcoming programs and projects</li> <li>❖ Factors impacting continued volunteer retention:</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Flexibility of organization</li> <li>○ Can recognize their purpose is being fulfilled</li> <li>○ Strong organizational leadership, enjoy the work, get along with others involved in the organization, are equipped and supported, and are part of a pleasant environment</li> <li>○ Hearing people are needed</li> <li>○ Organization keeps them engaged</li> <li>○ The non-profit values them and clientele being served</li> <li>○ People supervising volunteers' work are organized</li> <li>○ Seeing the clients being productive in society</li> <li>○ Support received from individuals associated with the program and their enthusiasm to make the services better for the customers</li> <li>○ Volunteers can observe personal growth in themselves</li> <li>○ Valuable work the organization provides and people associated with this non-profit</li> </ul>
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	<p>contribute to the community – highly respect these efforts and want to be connected with these individuals to learn from their skills and knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ People need to fit with their role</li> <li>○ Working under the management of others who are organized</li> <li>○ Being dependable to the staff and clients</li> </ul> <p>❖ The non-profit itself, the interview process, and individuals who are not seeking anything in return</p> <p>❖ Opportunity needs to connect with personal values and skillset</p>
<p>5) Tell me about what attracts you to volunteering in your local community and the specific organization(s) you are involved in.</p> <p><i>*Note: Addresses research question</i></p>	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Playing a role in a community helping and serving others</li> <li>❖ Value of what the organization offers and assisting in the process of making it feasible for as many people as possible to experience this</li> <li>❖ Significant need and compassion to help the organization</li> <li>❖ Services offer as a volunteer hit close to home</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Sense of accomplishment and good feeling able to make a difference</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Empowering others</li> <li>❖ Possess the resources and abilities to help</li> <li>❖ Opportunity to enhance knowledge from others</li> <li>❖ Enjoy the volunteer role</li> <li>❖ Because of person connection, believe have skills to contribute and should therefore, be involved</li> <li>❖ Work is heartwarming</li> <li>❖ Dedicated to the services the agency provides</li> <li>❖ Seeing the benefits of my work</li> <li>❖ Because children are grown, need engagements to occupy time available</li> <li>❖ Feel lucky can help those less fortunate</li> <li>❖ Semi-retired; therefore, can volunteer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current volunteer role is an area have a significant amount of experience in, able to work alone, and am fulfilled</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Value of type of position involved in as a volunteer, in addition to the systemic change possible in this role</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Opportunity to have a genuine impact</li> <li>❖ Observing people in poverty and desire to help people in this situation can experience what others can in society</li> <li>❖ Opportunity to volunteer as a family</li> <li>❖ Sharing what I have with others and helping people overcome negative life situations</li> <li>❖ Upbringing – family members volunteered</li> <li>❖ Cannot imagine not engaging in community</li> <li>❖ Will volunteer initially to determine how valuable or stimulating the opportunity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Level of interaction and involvement determines my continued engagement</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Being able to work with the families or clientele being served <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Because retired, able to offer more</li> <li>○ Volunteer work is our “calling”</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
6) What skills are most necessary in your volunteer role and why?	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Interacting with people</li> <li>❖ Customer service and people skills</li> <li>❖ Organization relating to the tasks the volunteer is involved in</li> <li>❖ Communication</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Imperative among those serving</li> <li>❖ Dedication, commitment, and responsibility</li> <li>❖ Trustworthiness and ability to follow through</li> <li>❖ Passion</li> <li>○ Impacts involvement</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Just showing up</li> <li>❖ Enthusiasm</li> <li>❖ Effective listening</li> <li>❖ Reliability</li> <li>❖ Loving, caring, and generosity</li> <li>❖ Patience</li> <li>❖ Flexibility</li> <li>○ Not having set ideas and willingness to help where needed</li> <li>❖ Understanding people's needs and being able to express what you can provide them</li> <li>❖ Familiarity of the service organization offers</li> <li>❖ Consistency</li> <li>❖ Committee members contribute different strengths to the group they are working with</li> <li>○ Successful committees are those that have a diverse group of volunteers</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Reading and meeting people</li> <li>❖ Working with computers and entering information into databases</li> <li>❖ Reading plans, drawings, and maps</li> <li>❖ Being organized</li> <li>❖ Ability to manage people and work effectively with others</li> <li>❖ Conflict resolution</li> <li>❖ Confident with viewpoints even when not most favorable and does not let egos interfere</li> <li>❖ Group player</li> <li>❖ Refrains from being decisive to others</li> <li>❖ Determination</li> <li>❖ Ability to drive a car</li> <li>❖ Creativity</li> <li>❖ Emotional intelligence</li> <li>❖ Not thinking that a task being fulfilled as a volunteer is less than your skills</li> <li>❖ When supervising other volunteers, need to be clear and concise with directions of what is needed</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Understanding of the organizations' policies to be able to communicate this information effectively to others</li> <li>❖ Empathy</li> <li>❖ Aptitude to commit to something that may not apply to your skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Willingness to challenge yourself</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Ability to recognize and accept that people have different skills and interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Being inclusive regardless if their attributes align with the organization's needs</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ No official skills needed other than having a smile on your face and willingness to help in whatever way you can</li> </ul>
7) Please explain what you believe to be the greatest strength a volunteer can bring to an organization.	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Enthusiasm and excitement</li> <li>❖ To attempt anything that needs to be done</li> <li>❖ Dependability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Willingness to follow through with what a volunteer says they are going to do</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Because of efforts involved in training and coordinating volunteers, in addition to the amount of work necessary to maintain other areas within the organization, staff need to rely on the volunteers</li> <li>❖ Care and compassion</li> <li>❖ Important to care about the organization and their purpose</li> <li>❖ Time</li> <li>❖ Motivation</li> <li>❖ Those working with volunteers need to know them and their background to utilize their strengths</li> <li>❖ Giving without expecting anything in return</li> <li>❖ Not having expectations will allow the volunteer to get more out of the experience</li> <li>❖ Being present emotionally, physically, and passionately and believe in what you are doing, otherwise, will lack dedication</li> <li>❖ Ability to connect with clientele</li> <li>❖ Volunteers putting their skills to use</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Everyone has a talent that can be utilized if applies to an area of need within an organization</li> <li>❖ “Whatever you can bring to the organization, you certainly have to get something out of it” (Participant R, personal communication, November 18, 2016).</li> <li>❖ Commitment</li> <li>❖ When this is a factor, organizations will locate opportunities for volunteers</li> <li>❖ Cannot give up immediately – need to see opportunity from beginning to end</li> <li>❖ Professionalism</li> <li>❖ Treat the volunteer position as if it were a job</li> </ul>
<p>8) Please elaborate more on what motivates you to not only get involved in a specific role or agency, but also remain engaged with the position or organization? (Internally/externally motivation factors).</p> <p><i>*Note: Addresses research question</i></p>	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ People working with impacts decision to stay involved with a non-profit</li> <li>❖ If their ideas, skills, time, and passions are respected, then they are more likely to continue engagement</li> <li>❖ Interacting with people and feeling good about what you as a volunteer are doing is vital</li> <li>❖ Being appreciated</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Knowing superiors value, you as a volunteer including input and engagement, and knowing you are making a difference</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Time is well utilized – not participating in busy work</li> <li>❖ Look forward to volunteer role</li> <li>❖ Enjoy work and services provided</li> <li>❖ Passionate about the services provided to the clientele, which connect to volunteer's background</li> <li>❖ Satisfied with outcomes of organization</li> <li>❖ Observing a need, which leads to desire to get involved</li> <li>❖ Give volunteering a try</li> <li>❖ Even when it may take some time to see benefits of your work</li> <li>❖ Organization must perform what their mission is</li> <li>❖ Environment needs to be safe for volunteers</li> <li>❖ Being able to motivate people to have face-to-face interaction with others</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Upbringing – parents were involved in volunteer capacities</li> <li>❖ Decision to remain engaged relates to if the organization connects routinely with the volunteer, offers support and educational opportunities, and appropriately meets the volunteers’ needs</li> <li>❖ Because of personal connection to the non-profit the participant volunteers with, the opportunity brings their family together and involved in the organization</li> <li>❖ On-going training and understanding of vision</li> <li>❖ Imperative for leaders to believe in the organizations’ cause and be excited about it</li> <li>❖ Leads to volunteer enthusiasm</li> <li>❖ Feeling of selfishness if do not engage in volunteer roles</li> <li>❖ Appreciate views from others</li> <li>❖ Drawn to committed and established organizations and those that support the volunteers and their aptitude to make a difference</li> <li>❖ In the past, considered discontinuing role</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Because of conversation with staff member, realized importance of engagement and re-grounded on a personal level as a volunteer</li> <li>❖ Personally, observing people experiencing difficult situations in life and attempting to help them</li> <li>❖ Securing the perfect fit</li> <li>❖ Volunteering provides meaning in life</li> <li>❖ Desire to make the world a better place than believed it was as a youth</li> <li>❖ Aspiration for children to learn there are others less fortunate</li> <li>❖ Mutual feeling of clientele looking forward to seeing us</li> <li>❖ Developed a connection with the families being helped</li> </ul>
9) Briefly discuss how your organization works to motivate and retain volunteers. Do you believe improvement in these processes is necessary? If so, why?	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Effectual communication and training helps motivate and retain volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Helps volunteers understand expectations, the vision of the organization, and remain informed about the organization</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Thank you's help motivate, retain, and make volunteers feel valued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ While nice, recognition not important to some volunteers</li> <li>○ Gratitude expressed through distributing plaques, pins, gift cards, and acknowledgment in newsletters, through Facebook, and verbally – for some volunteers this is a significant motivational component in feeling appreciated and know they are making a difference</li> <li>○ Appreciation brunches, luncheons, and dinners highlighting volunteer achievements</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Improvement not necessary as receive the feedback needed</li> <li>❖ Improvements are always desired and are on-going</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Important for volunteers to be placed in positions where they can perform well and find</li> </ul>
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	<p>they are making contributions to the organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Attempted to hold retreat for this in the past, but was unsuccessful</li> <li>❖ Recruiting new volunteers has become more difficult to accomplish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ People should want to be involved in the organization</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Volunteer manager stays on top of things as needed with the volunteers</li> <li>❖ Acknowledgment of how many hours people volunteer</li> <li>❖ Providing volunteer hours for youth who require community service work</li> <li>❖ Offering recommendations and references for volunteers looking for jobs and scholarships</li> <li>❖ Through the leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Important to have new ideas</li> <li>○ Hosts fun events – important activities are enjoyable for volunteers</li> <li>○ Volunteer trainings</li> <li>○ Regularity of connecting with and educating volunteers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Organization is familiar with engaging their volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Believe the non-profit knows about us and looks forward to seeing us</li> <li>○ Volunteers interact and engage with each other while carrying out their obligation to the agency</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Use of social media</li> <li>❖ Staff who work with volunteers are very good in their roles</li> <li>❖ After event wrap-up meetings</li> <li>❖ Examples for improvement include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Need for improvement may explain lack of volunteer engagement</li> <li>○ Recruitment strategies for volunteers</li> <li>○ Examples include being able to help more people in the community and organizing the tasks more effectively for the volunteers</li> <li>○ Another idea relates to the recruiting process of volunteers</li> <li>○ Could be more welcoming or initiating – do a better job of introducing people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<p>to one another and making them feel more comfortable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Finding additional methods of motivating and retaining volunteers can help people maintain an interest in engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Example might include opportunity for volunteer to collaborate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>10) Does your organization have an evaluation system in place where you are able to share your viewpoints on the program or organization as a whole? If so, please briefly explain.</p>	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ No formal systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feedback is generally welcomed on an as needed basis in person, via email, phone, or through a message board on the organizations' website</li> <li>○ Continuously receptive to new ideas</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Feedback welcomed during an event or at wrap-up sessions following an event</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Enjoy the opportunity to provide formal input concerning various issues that arise</li> <li>❖ Helpful if director offered criticism to the volunteers so knew what could improve on</li> <li>❖ Would appreciate opportunity to provide formal feedback</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Have personal relationship with the executive director; therefore, ideas can be shared at any time</li> <li>❖ Asked to provide input while attending a lunch with the executive director, other staff members, and board members</li> <li>❖ Organization is effective at trusting volunteers to do what they believe is suitable and then supporting these decisions through offering resources as needed so the volunteer can perform such duties</li> <li>❖ Appreciate opportunity to receive clientele feedback</li> <li>❖ Survey tools have been implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sometimes distributed after people volunteer for something</li> <li>○ Not always utilized sufficiently</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ System in place where a 30-minute phone call is available if the volunteer is interested in participating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Involved answering a series of questions about what has worked well, what has</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<p>not, what can be clarified, and what was most significant for the volunteer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ When it comes to safety concerns, some volunteers are trusted with handling these situations themselves without immediately seeking staff attention or approval</li> </ul>
11) Briefly discuss your expectations for volunteer administrators you are working with.	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Listens and supportive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Acts on input from volunteers</li> <li>○ Addresses volunteer needs or questions</li> <li>○ Continually locates answers</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Appreciative</li> <li>❖ Communication and follow-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Important among the relationships of volunteers and administrators</li> <li>○ In a timely manner</li> <li>○ Keep volunteers informed as needed</li> <li>○ Checks on volunteers, which can be accomplished through continual training programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Connect gaps and form relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduce volunteers to one another and play a role in helping them become</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>acquainted with each other – people are less likely to remain engaged with an organization if they do not know anyone or are not comfortable</p> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Manage what is happening and ensure operating smoothly</li> <li>❖ Respectful of the volunteer and their time</li> <li>❖ Responsible</li> <li>❖ Organized</li> <li>❖ Facilitate the volunteer opportunity</li> <li>❖ Provide volunteers with coffee during morning activities and is welcoming</li> <li>❖ Vision casting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keeping volunteers enthusiastic and passionate about their work</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Is very clear regarding all aspects of a role when engaging a person in a volunteer activity including what it is, how long it lasts, expectations, and any additional pertinent information</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure the volunteers are acquainted with the organization and comprehend the purpose and values</li> <li>❖ Offer programs</li> <li>❖ Provide a comfortable working relationship with the volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Know the volunteers and ensure the volunteers are trained</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12) Do you feel appreciated in your volunteer role? Please explain.	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Yes (overall, most of the participants feel appreciated most of the time)</li> <li>❖ Receive appreciation meals, events, and small gifts</li> <li>❖ In person thank you's and notes are more meaningful than an email sent to multiple people because not everyone contributes similarly</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Receiving thank you's via email</li> <li>❖ Occasionally, do not feel appreciated, but not typically the case</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Does not require a lot of ‘atta boys,’ but this is nice</li> <li>❖ Would not be involved if did not believe volunteer work was appreciated</li> <li>❖ Feel like a part of the team, rather than just someone who volunteers for limited hours each week</li> <li>❖ Rewards and recognition not necessary; however, appreciated</li> <li>❖ Birthday parties for clientele and volunteers</li> <li>❖ Relationships established with clients supports the feeling of being appreciated</li> <li>❖ Helpful that organization provides statistics on the number of volunteer hours worked to equate how much funds are being saved from volunteerism</li> <li>❖ Feel wanted when asked to serve on planning boards or fulfill other roles</li> </ul>
13) What do you find most challenging as a volunteer?	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Working with clientele schedule</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Desiring additional time to volunteer if scheduled allowed or do more for the clients because love the work performed</li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Working hard and realizing that not all the volunteers with the organization do the same or commit to what they indicated they would do <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can be frustrating when efforts do not appear to result in a positive or forward direction</li> <li>○ When there are not funds to better areas of the organization</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Motivating others to fulfill needs or dealing with others who have dissimilar motivation levels</li> <li>❖ Supporting clients working with</li> <li>❖ When there is, inconsistency concerning the organization of the agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sometimes events and other one-time activities appear more organized than on-going programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Seeing others committing to more than they have time for</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ When clients are unpleasant, although occurs seldom</li> <li>❖ Commute to the organization</li> <li>❖ Volunteering can sometimes seem uninteresting or repetitive and it is therefore, possible for volunteers to be stagnate and the experience less rewarding</li> <li>❖ Not being able to tell others what to do and insist they be responsible</li> <li>❖ Remembering commitment made to the organization</li> <li>❖ Completing tasks that do not always relate to the volunteers' interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do not like to say no, so complete the task anyways</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Communication with clientele <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interacting with people of different languages</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Maintaining limitations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Important as a volunteer to sustain balance with family life</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feel the job is never complete; however, vital to maintain balance for personal life</li> </ul>
14) Please describe the most rewarding elements of being a volunteer.	<p>Some of the common themes included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Feeling good about the work engaged in as a volunteer, acquiring new skills, meeting new people, and involvement in activities would not otherwise participate in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Making a difference and empowering others</li> <li>○ Feel privileged to help others</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Volunteering establishes connections people may not normally have exposure to</li> <li>❖ Observing the outcomes of the services offered, time spent with the clients, and knowing volunteers' skills were implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Excitement and enthusiasm observed in the clients and the gratitude received from them and their desire to spend more time with the volunteers</li> <li>○ Validates involvement in organization</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Additional ideas encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Creating win-win situations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engaging in volunteer roles remind people of diversity, different lives individuals live, the humanity of others, and enhance compassion</li> <li>○ Learning of inspiring stories of people in the program</li> <li>❖ Being valued similarly to employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tasks or work are not viewed on a lower level compared to staff members</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Rewarding to see others such as clients be more efficient or happy engaging in an activity because of a volunteer's efforts</li> <li>❖ Receiving outstanding evaluations after events, especially from those who are unfamiliar with the work involved in administering an event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Thank you's and comments from these individuals on how effective and helpful the event was rewarding</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Relationships built with the families or clients being served during the volunteer engagement and sustained after the clients exit the program</li> <li>❖ Friendships and interactions established between the staff, volunteers, and clientele</li> </ul>
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<p>15) Do you have any additional insight you want to share concerning the topic of volunteer motivation and retention in community non-profit organizations?</p>	<p>There were no common themes identified with this interview question.</p> <p>The ideas shared encompassed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ When interested in pursuing a volunteer role, locate an opportunity you are passionate about</li> <li>❖ Important for volunteers to feel they are making a difference</li> <li>❖ Do not believe the answer is to give up when issues arise, but rather to keep moving forward</li> <li>❖ Regardless of who the volunteers are, they should be treated with appreciation and respect</li> <li>❖ Amazing when people retire, they still make the commitment to volunteer consistently every week</li> <li>❖ Considerate use of volunteers' time is imperative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Essential for administrators to understand what the volunteers' greatest gifts are and ensure that what is asked of them is considered a crucial component of the organization</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Time, income, and skills to contribute as a volunteer is extravagant</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feel privileged currently able to donate time with the organization and am grateful for the opportunity to engage</li> <li>❖ Volunteer involvement is a commitment to the people being served <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Becoming acquainted with clientele – not simply making a financial contribution to the organization</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ Being in an organized environment</li> <li>❖ “Volunteering and encouraging people to volunteer and taking care of their volunteers, when you are a nonprofit, it creates a more empathetic and, therefore, a more just and inclusive society” (Participant P, personal communication, November 15, 2016).</li> <li>❖ Imperative to have a large pool of volunteers so they do not become overworked or burned out</li> <li>❖ Vital for organizations to make volunteers feel that if they were not involved, the agency would be less than their potential</li> <li>❖ Difficult to manage situations when there are changes in an organization and another person is needed to fill a role</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If the people who take charge on these items are passionate about what they are doing, helpful in the process of maintaining volunteer involvement in the organization</li> <li>❖ Aptitude to change from personal mentality to that of fulfillment from volunteer engagements</li> <li>❖ Recruiting volunteers is becoming more and more difficult because people are so busy</li> <li>❖ New ideas and motivations are important to keep events from being inactive and maintain volunteer involvement</li> <li>❖ Staff members should provide chaos-free environments, otherwise the volunteerism can be negatively impacted</li> <li>❖ Imperative to be respectful of activities that the clientele need</li> <li>❖ People are more willing to remain engaged for longer periods of time when they are not pressured or frustrated</li> <li>❖ Give volunteering a try <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Helping others is very rewarding</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## **Summary**

The findings from the interview process offered a diverse look at the topic of volunteer motivation and retention in community-based non-profits. The data implied the varying needs of adults and how such factors should be considered by administrators of volunteer programs to provide valuable experiences for volunteers. This notion can then increase the chance of volunteer success, thus allowing for increased chance of benefit to the organization.

Overall, the interview process was very rewarding for the researcher and provided more in-depth perspectives to the topic of volunteer motivation and retention in community-based non-profits. It is intended that such information the researcher gathered will allow administrators of non-profits to slow down and better understand how they can enhance their own opportunities for volunteers. This comprehension can be to better their organization and not only provide an attractive environment for prospective volunteers, but also a pleasant atmosphere. A satisfying environment can help encourage and motivate current volunteers to not only continue their work, also to be inspired to operate in ways they have not in the past and desire to stay with the organization if their situation allows. The hope is this research will also allow volunteers to become more acquainted with why they perform the work they do with non-profits.

## **Chapter 5 – Discussion**

Volunteerism is a complex field, especially when working with adults because of such diverse and varying background and skills. As expressed during the interview process, adults contribute a wealth of knowledge and experience to the varying volunteer roles and types of non-profits they relate to. A summary of Chapters 1-4 will be addressed further in the following section. Additional sections in this chapter include the following: investigation and generalization; factors unanticipated; limitations; recommendations for future research; implications; significance of the study; and a conclusion.

### **Summary of the Findings**

People are attracted to volunteer positions and motivated to not only initially get involved, but remain engaged for a variety of reasons. Moreover, the common theme identified in this study is that personal compassion for others and the cause of the organization plays a significant role relating to engagement. Additionally, the opportunity to give back in various forms is another contributing factor commonly found from the participants. Through the data collection stage, it was clear how passionate these volunteers were because of their enthusiasm, level of passion, and genuine concern for others in a setting that is a good fit for them. When it comes to staying involved in a volunteer role with an organization, the idea of feeling appreciated was frequently shared by the interviewees as a key component in this decision, in addition to recognizing they are making a difference.

Because of the need for volunteers in non-profits and the noteworthy work they contribute to the cause of the organization they are associated with; this research topic was worthy of exploring. More specifically, the challenge of securing volunteers in long-term or on-going commitments based on the researchers' experience managing volunteers in the non-profit

sector, in addition to the lack of literature obtainable supports the need for investigation.

Because the literature available when assessing for the development of the proposal stage of this study is not particular to the emphasis area of this study, the information gathered from the interview process helps satisfy gaps in the literature.

Rather than having research that can be connected to several areas of this research, as opposed to having more specific correlations, the data collected now fulfills an area of volunteerism that previously lacked information. Essentially, there is no longer a wide-ranging overview relating to volunteerism that can connect in some ways to the topic of this study. The idea of examining this topic through the process of interviewing adult high-functioning volunteers with semi-structured questions allowed for an in-depth assessment of factors relating to the motivation and retention of volunteers. This notion will be helpful in enlightening administrators of non-profits in enriching their volunteer programs. This concept is especially valuable to the realm of volunteerism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As implied in the literature and validated through the interview process, training and support for volunteers is imperative to the idea of motivation and retention. Additionally, checking in with these individuals to ensure their needs are being met is essential. Furthermore, volunteers appreciate the opportunity to have flexibility and the autonomy to fulfill their role.

Overall, the quality of the interview sessions was very good. Because the questions addressed were semi-structured, the participants had the opportunity to share their views however they desired. The process of reviewing the IRS listing of all non-profits containing a Denver address was helpful in recognizing organizations that most likely contain active volunteer programs. This involved a lengthy practice due to the size of the directory. However,

it was still beneficial to have this option to develop a condensed group of entities to further research and inquire with staff about assisting with identifying potential study participants.

The opportunity for the interviewees to choose their meeting method or location preference allowed for diversity in how the experiences shared were communicated or expressed. While this was a factor for nearly all the participants, there were a limited number of interviews that had to be scheduled via Zoom rather than in person due to the researcher's personal situation. The research methodology selected in capturing the information to adequately address the research question. Not only did the chosen process successfully speak to the research question, but because additional inquiries were asked, this combination permitted for an extensive analysis of the study. Furthermore, allowing participants to verbalize their input and experience whether in person, via Zoom, or through a phone discussion, created a conversation like experience. This concept was valuable in the researcher comprehending the participants' thoughts versus conducting the interviews via email or a survey method. More specifically, the selected methodology including the interview method and location allowed for an engaging and in-depth investigation of the research topic.

The chance to interview adult volunteers who represent an array of different types, sizes, and structured non-profits allows for a diverse examination of the research topic rather than centering on one form or a limited number of organizations. While in some cases, more than one person was interviewed from the same agency, even though there was some crossover or comparison in their responses, there were still variances in the input offered. This notion validates the variations and uniqueness that adults possess. Because of this diverse representation; even though there was a greater number of females interviewed compared to

males, a thorough analysis of the topic is still available with the potential to serve a large audience of the non-profit sector.

Through this study and assessment of volunteerism across a variety of organizations, not only can more volunteer administrators find value in the study, but this can lead to more programs being positively impacted. This idea can then lead to enriching a greater portion of communities. This enhancement can occur through learning ideas and methods of motivating and retaining volunteers and identifying strengths and areas for improvement in non-profit programming.

Adult volunteer needs, interests, and passions may differ from one person to the next. These realizations discovered from the study can still be valuable for program administrators, especially for the recognition that each volunteer should not be compared to their counterparts. The data collected implies that a significant element of volunteer success is based on support they receive from administrators and rewarding experiences. A significant amount of the data is still general enough and does not necessarily connect to one individual or type of organization, which can be noteworthy for those supervising volunteers and such programs. The idea that there was some comparability in the feedback of the volunteers can still validate the importance of examining this topic. However, due to the distinctiveness captured during the interview process, it should not be assumed that just because a considerable portion of the input offered did not compare to others responses that it is not important or justifiable.

In addition to the research potentially impacting a wider population of non-profit types and the supervisors that oversee such volunteer programs, it is intended a similar instance will transpire for volunteers. The hope is that the research participants and those who choose to review the study will familiarize themselves with several factors pertaining to their motivation to

get involved in volunteer capacities and remain engaged with a role and/or organization. This idea may improve their efforts as a volunteer, work to enhance overall programs, or help them to re-think why they are involved and if they should make any modifications to such participation, whatever this may entail.

### **Investigation and Generalization**

The research question, what factors attract high-functioning adult volunteers to engage in community-based non-profits and what makes them stay with an organization is clearly addressed through the evidence provided in the Analysis Identified from the Themes section of Chapter 4. This information was obtained through interview questions five and eight that the participants responded to (refer to appendix A). The researcher found it valuable to address additional inquiries during the interview process not necessarily pertaining directly the research question as this notion allowed for an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of the topic.

The aim of this investigation was to explore factors impacting what draws high-functioning adults to their volunteer roles and what makes them stay engaged. The researcher's initial thinking that the notion of volunteer motivation and retention involves multiple components depending on the individual volunteer has been validated. This justification is through the data collected during the interview process for this study. These elements as a part of the researcher's original speculation include concepts related to the volunteers' experience and potentially the type of organization they are affiliated with. Not only is the array of data collected from the interview stage confirmed in comparison to the investigator's preliminary thoughts, but these concepts have significantly expanded their knowledge of this focus area relating to volunteerism.

The insight and ideas shared from each participant support the distinctiveness adults contribute based on varying backgrounds and skills to volunteer roles, in addition to the varying needs these individuals require. Furthermore, while the interviewees support these differences, the interview sessions can provide significant value to the realm of volunteerism in the non-profit sector. More specifically, the data collected from these meetings can be significant for the people involved with volunteer programs and managing volunteers, such as administrators. This notion is probable because of the thorough and extensive assessment of the research topic that has been provided through the researcher interviewing 18 different volunteers who represented 10 non-profit entities.

### **Applicable Theories**

As suggested by Grbich (2013), the thematic analysis model was implemented during the coding stage and used through establishing connections with the interview findings to various theories. The self-determination theory (SDT) as described by Haivas, Hofmans, and Pepermans (2012) is applicable to this study. “According to SDT, the social context has an impact on the satisfaction of the needs, and this in turn influences autonomous (or self-determined) motivation” (Haivas, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2012, p. 1196). More specifically, these authors explain how all people have inborn propensities to grow and advance closer to their complete capability. SDT was shown through the one of the participant responses provided to interview question number eight (refer to appendix A). This interviewee noted how the clientele they work with look forward to seeing them, which makes them feel like they are family. This pleasant feeling creates an environment they look forward to serving in that is not only desirable, but enjoyable. It is clear they are needed and make a difference, which validates their engagement.

Another model relevant to this study is the systemic quality of life theory as explained by Shye (2010). This author discussed how this model investigates possible drives for volunteer engagement through exploring all factors that may relate to volunteers' involvement rather assessing social behavior and the motivations for it. This scheme examines actual human characteristics and behavior and potential associated motivational factors. Furthermore, the author implies how this theory is meaningful in better comprehending behavior linked to motivation in volunteer capacities. This ideology connects to one of the participant responses to interview question number five (see appendix A). This individual explained how they enjoy working with youth, which is the audience of the non-profit they represent. The interviewee knew that adult volunteers were needed in various aspects. Because they were interested in a volunteer role they could participate with their children who they were already transporting to this organization, it made sense to get involved and help with various events. However, it is imperative to them that the opportunity be valuable and stimulating and their continued involvement is determined by the initial level of interaction and participation they experienced. For this participant, there are several factors contributing to their engagement with the organization.

Erikson's psychosocial theory of human development, which addresses lifespan development is another ideology pertinent to this study. "According to Erikson's theory, an individual goes through eight developmental stages, in each of which he must face and cope with a central psychosocial problem or crisis" (Munley, 1975, p. 314). This author explains that as people encounter different life experiences, the outcomes contribute to their success and character development. This notion is especially relevant to the older participants who have been volunteering for several years, some in many capacities, and provides a good example of



why they are volunteering. The opportunity to volunteer in various forms in which they can display their skills and passions is rewarding.

The concept of self-efficacy also correlates to this study. This theory encompasses “beliefs in one’s capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet given situational demands” (Gist & Mitchell, 1992, p. 184). One participant commented in their response to interview question number five (see appendix A) about how when they recognize a need, they step in to do what needs to be done. Because they have a take charge character and are committed and dedicated, it is apparent they are confident in their abilities, which allows them to successfully fulfill various tasks in their volunteer role.

### **Assumptions**

The following are presumptions for the outcomes of this study:

- ❖ Will enrich the overall non-profit community across numerous geographic locations as addressed in Chapter 3
  - Evidence or data collected in the study is wide-ranging and not specific to types or organizations; therefore, it is expected the information will be relevant to non-profit agencies across numerous locations
- ❖ Provide better comprehension/awareness of the research topic as it pertains to the realm of volunteerism in the non-profit sector
- ❖ Anticipated that the data increase diversity
  - Predicted because of increased cognizance administrators and other individuals working with volunteer programs will be acquainted with because of this study from learning more of volunteer needs as it pertains to motivation and retention

The hope is this study will allow the participants to become more acquainted with themselves and the factors influencing their volunteerism. Additionally, it is anticipated this research investigation will enhance not only the non-profit community, but also communities who rely on non-profit agencies. This familiarity can allow the number of those participating in volunteer roles to increase, improve performance, and enhance relationships with volunteer leaders and administrators so they will continue their role in volunteerism. This study is also an opportunity in which the participants and community will benefit from their self-discoveries during the research process and at the time of project completion.

It is expected that the following ideas will be determined because of this study for non-profit administrators.

- ❖ Factors that will help volunteer administrators encourage people of this age cohort to get involved in volunteer roles even when the potential volunteers' availability may be limited
- ❖ Methods in which leaders and administrators can effectively build relationships with volunteers that will be long-lasting and benefit the organization they work with
- ❖ Elements associated with ensuring the volunteers are making best use of their time and the experience will be worth their time and energy

### **Factors Unanticipated**

The researcher was surprised by the variances of forms in which people were recruited or secured their volunteer roles. Many participants were not directly selected by a staff member, but rather by them reaching out to the organization or being referred by a friend. This is somewhat unexpected as it was anticipated there might have been more cases where volunteer administrators, coordinators, or other staff had done more of the recruiting themselves. In many

ways, this makes sense because an individual knows what their passions and interests are. If these people are attracted to volunteering, they can do their own research or outreach to find out more about options for involvement in the community that are a good fit.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the investigator did not anticipate all the issue that would occur securing organizations to participate in this study and the length of time it would take to complete the data collection process. However, this extensive process created a comprehensive learning experience. Each obstacle encountered allowed for a realization that was utilized to enhance this study going forward.

### **Limitations**

The following are limitations discovered throughout this study:

- ❖ The idea of the researcher sorting out organizations through the random selection process – there may be some non-profits the researcher missed that have active volunteer programs.
- ❖ The idea of relying on non-profit supervisors to identify and be knowledgeable of who they deem as high-functioning in their volunteer roles can be viewed as a limitation. The notion of the administrators selecting the potential participants involves the concept of generalizability.
  - While some guidance through providing a definition of high-functioning was referenced to these individuals in the administrator contact letter (refer to appendix B), ultimately, it was up to these managers to make this judgment and assessment with their suggestion to the researcher.
- ❖ Some organizations did not utilize volunteers.
- ❖ Another limitation involved the target audience. There were some people who chose

- not participate in this study for various reasons.
- ❖ The concept of not having a universal definition of high-functioning can serve as a limitation as each volunteer manager used their own criteria with some guidance provided in the administrator contact letter (see appendix B).
  - ❖ The researcher's experiences
    - Close connections to the topic based on the researcher's experience – might be a value or a limitation to some people

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Further research or studies may involve the following:

- ❖ Age groups – assessing age cohorts
- ❖ Working versus non-working status – investigating those who work part-time, full-time, or are retired
- ❖ Types of volunteers – observing episodic versus those who are committed long-term
- ❖ Length of time people have been volunteering – assess experiences of volunteers who have been engaged in non-profits for 10+ years versus those who have recently committed – less than two years
- ❖ Types of organizations
  - Exploring non-profits who have similar causes to one another
  - Examining specific types of non-profits and comparing the information to this research
- ❖ Gender – examining male versus female volunteers, especially since more women than men participated in the study

- ❖ Historical examination – assessing and comparing the topic of volunteer motivation and retention in years past to that of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- ❖ Learning how values, upbringing, and experiences influence volunteer motivation and retention
- ❖ Similar studies looking at the following ideas:
  - Comparison of social enterprises to 501c3 non-profits
  - Examination of specific types of non-profits in an urban setting compared to a rural location
    - Assess any variances, such as the pool of non-profits to select from and volunteer age variances and background
  - Assessment of volunteer responses from non-profits who are considered large versus small
- ❖ Follow-up interviews with the participants to inquire if partaking in this study modified their volunteer engagement in any form and if so, how? This might involve asking the same interview questions and examine how their work, efforts, and outlook has changed since initial participation in the study. If applicable, this inquiry might involve the question if transformative learning occurred from participating.
- ❖ Reconnect with the managers of the participants for this study if they are still actively involved with the organization to inquire how their volunteer work has changed since engaging in the study
- ❖ Impact of mentorships

- ❖ Information connected to volunteer motivation and retention in comparison to different types of non-profits and if there are trends associated to similar kinds of non-profits compared to other organizations
  - For instance, investigate what characteristics exist in high-functioning volunteers of non-faith based or faith based non-profits who engage in a minimum of a certain number of hours per month compared to those who participate in roles less frequently
    - Factors to evaluate might include organization type and gender with comparison to the number of volunteer hours performed each month
- ❖ Does volunteerism vary by:
  - Race
  - Socioeconomics
  - Education (levels of education)
- ❖ Are wealthy educated people in this age range more likely to donate funds than they are to physically volunteer?
  - Are these people (general participants) willing to donate money instead of volunteer their time?
- ❖ Does previous experience play a role?
- ❖ Does volunteerism decrease as social status increases?
- ❖ Assessment of how values impact volunteer motivation and retention
- ❖ Observing the experiences volunteers contribute to organizations and how this influences their engagement
- ❖ Pursue additional research investigations based on questions this study poses

- ❖ Compare results of this study to other locations

### **Implications**

This study implies the following concepts:

- ❖ This research will offer methods of improving retention rates and altering programming as necessary to keep volunteers motivated. Furthermore, this study will identify factors as to why some people volunteer with some organizations compared to other entities.
- ❖ Passionate and trustworthy leaders lead to followers including volunteers thus impacting retention and “integrity has high influence value” (p. 39), thus resulting in a concrete reputation (Maxwell, 1993).
  - This is vital to the success of non-profits, especially because of their dependency on volunteer work and will increase the likelihood of retention.
- ❖ It is essential to provide person-centered leadership as it focuses on individuals and teams and requires administrators to empower these people (Plas & Lewis, 2000).
  - This approach focuses on recognizing personal and organizational weaknesses, which allow for continuous improvement.
- ❖ Even though focusing on the needs of volunteers is imperative, an emphasis on the service to the community is important. This may include helping to fill various gaps in the community.
- ❖ Administrators of non-profits are often busy in their roles as gathered during the process of making contacts with potential organizations to be represented in the study, thus the need for volunteers.

The researcher anticipates the following ideas will be determined because of this study for non-profit leaders and administrators.

- ❖ Factors that will help volunteer leaders and administrators encourage people of this age cohort to get involved in volunteer roles even when the potential volunteers' availability may be limited
- ❖ Methods in which leaders and administrators can effectively build relationships with volunteers that will be long-lasting and benefit the organization they work with
- ❖ Elements associated with ensuring they are making best use of their time and this experience will be worth their time and energy
- ❖ Continued evaluation can occur through further studies and the practice of volunteer managers incessantly assessing their volunteer programs

The following notions are implications for the field that this study presents:

- ❖ The field of volunteerism is not only a pertinent element to the non-profit sector, but should be continuously evaluated by program administrators, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because of the array of adult volunteer needs.
- ❖ The role of volunteer administrators is complex.
- ❖ Non-profits rely on volunteers from various backgrounds, skills, and expertise to fulfill their mission.
- ❖ Because volunteers differ in their abilities, strengths, and backgrounds, they should be placed in capacities where they can best utilize these talents and experience and most effectively benefit the organization they are working with.
- ❖ The idea of understand volunteer needs is imperative.



### **Significance of the Study**

This research study has been a phenomenal experiential learning opportunity for the researcher. The idea of interviewing volunteers who represent an array of organizations has significantly broadened the researcher's perspectives and knowledge of factors impacting volunteer motivation and retention. People participate in volunteer roles for various reasons.

The research question and study is significant to the field of educational leadership and adult education the researcher is studying within their doctoral program as their interest with non-profits encompasses a substantial relationship with volunteers. The researcher has found that numerous organizations in the non-profit sector offer programs for an adult audience. Many of these offerings pertain to educating these individuals in some form, whether this involves formal or non-formal instruction. The correlation of the study to the researcher's doctoral program is developed from their learning, observation, and experience in the non-profit sector. Because many non-profits offer educational opportunities in various forms for adults, this notion led to the research focus on volunteerism. The entire research process for the development of this study has provided the researcher with information and experience valuable to all aspects of their current and future career goals.

### **Lessons Learned**

The entire research process has significantly enhanced the researcher's knowledge and understanding of qualitative studies and methodology. What appears to be an effectual tool and process of collecting data is not always the most practical approach. It is important to be patient, assess the big picture, learn from each step or process, and be willing to make changes as needed to keep the research moving forward with the intention of successful outcomes. The researcher's knowledge of how much the field of adult education and educational leadership

apply to the non-profit sector and collaborating with volunteers has been significantly enhanced throughout the development of this project. The ability to effectively collaborate with adults and develop and manage effectual volunteer programs while carrying out other aspects of volunteer management and leadership roles relates well to the field of adult education. This concept is especially accurate because of the principles of working with adults and adult learners in the 21st century the importance of understanding and establishing connections of both fields.

Depending on the type of organization, some individuals engage in volunteer roles due to a life circumstance or personal situation that impacted them. They were then drawn to the support received from programs offered and other families involved. Others are attracted because of the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people, network, and engage in roles that provide them with a sense of accomplishment. The choice to remain engaged with an organization long-term encompasses a variety of reasons; however, this idea overall relates to positive impacts being made. These thoughts considered, in addition to the diverse skills and background adults have the capability of contributing to the environments they are involved in, the researcher realizes the significance of not comparing volunteers. Not only are these individuals unique in their abilities, but also in their purpose for committing to a role. This notion leads to the concept of ensuring volunteers are placed in appropriate positions and establish means of checking in with them.

In talking with high-functioning volunteers, the researcher realizes how valuable their time is and the importance of setting up or framing their experience with an organization to enhance the likelihood for them to thrive. These individuals would not be where they are with the non-profit they represent if they were not treated appropriately. There is something significant that keeps these people engaging and coming back to the organization to make

continued contributions. Furthermore, the researcher recognizes that compassion and passion play a major role in initial volunteer involvement; therefore, it is important to help foster this area from administrator.

Tangible rewards do not necessarily attract people to participate in volunteer positions or are a factor in keeping them engaged. However, knowing they are appreciated and recognized in person, through hand-written notes, other thank you correspondence, and at events can go a long way and is vital in continued involvement. As busy as volunteer administrators can be, it is important to take time to thank their volunteers. It is implied from the data collected that while acknowledgment is imperative to continual volunteer commitment, there is much more that comes from the time and efforts the participants provide to the non-profits they are associated with. It is clear these individuals overall are involved because of their passion and interest in the cause of the organization. Furthermore, because of the difference being made in community due to their contributions, this is where the fulfillment and contentment lies in them.

Rather than having formal evaluation tools or systems in place, it appears that more informal methods where volunteers can offer their input and suggestions seems to work well when needed in many cases. This idea may serve as a more personal approach to gathering feedback from volunteers rather than through surveys. Personal communications can be much more extensive compared to a survey. It does however, make sense how administrators may not always be able to spend a significant amount of time with each volunteer they work with to collect such information, due to their current workload. Although, it is important to make time for such conversations. The researcher realizes that volunteers appreciate staff members who take the time to listen to them and that effective time management when working with volunteers is vital.

The expectations volunteers have the administrators they are working with is a concept the researcher was not previously acquainted with. This notion is helpful in better understanding volunteers' needs to provide them with rewarding experiences. It was interesting to learn of the variances in the participants' responses. These ideas can also help administrators ensure they are not only fulfilling volunteer needs, but to better structure their programs as needed, which will help the overall volunteer experience. In return, an awareness and comprehension of the expectations volunteers have for the supervisors they are collaborating with in non-profit settings can allow the administrator to work more effectively in their role and enrich the organization. However, for such improvements to occur, these managers need to be receptive to modifications and possess the willingness to listen to their volunteers. Some additional ideas or lessons the researcher learned include the following:

- ❖ Work and personal experience can play a role in impacting volunteer engagement
- ❖ Interesting to observe variances in how each participant addressed the same set of questions, although, there was some crossover in the comments offered
- ❖ Networking plays a role in volunteer involvement
- ❖ Opportunity to empower others can play a role in peoples' motivation to volunteer
- ❖ Volunteer opportunities allow for a plethora of skillsets and backgrounds to be utilized

### **Career Aspirations**

All of knowledge obtained during the entire development of this research project is valuable on many levels among different aspects of the investigator's career. Examples of how the researcher plans to utilize elements of this research project include the following:

- ❖ Educate the community, which correlates with the researcher's desire to provide education-based consulting work for non-profits, especially with organizations who encompass programs that offer formal, informal, or non-formal learning opportunities for adults
  - Because of the need for volunteers in this sector, a more enriched knowledge of what draws these individuals to engage in volunteerism and what makes them stay has provided the researcher with information valuable to their efforts of providing consulting work.
    - This includes attempts of helping non-profits successfully deliver their mission through learning tactics relevant to attracting and sustaining volunteers and information.
  - The audience or clientele of workshops might include non-profit leaders.
- ❖ Teach within education or leadership areas and applicable to work with the non-profit sector
- ❖ Develop online information/educational sessions, webinars, books, articles, and guides to help administrators locally and globally with different elements associated with attracting, motivating, and retaining volunteers, in addition to other pertinent areas of volunteerism
- ❖ Form networking and support groups in the local community to bring non-profit leaders and anyone associated with this sector together to learn from each other's experiences and knowledge of varying topics encountered in non-profits

- Based on the researcher's experience, the opportunity for people to learn from real-life experiences of others in the community will allow for a practical approach to gaining insight valuable to different segments of people's careers.
  - Furthermore, these individuals can develop long-lasting relationships pertinent to their profession, thus enriching the local non-profit sector, which can better serve the community.
- This will also be a chance to for the researcher to administer presentations and classes on various topics relating to volunteer leadership development, which was the preliminary study to this examination. Additionally, discussions will include the motivation and retention of volunteers in community-based non-profits, especially since the researcher understands the significance of volunteers in non-profits. Other topics will be presented as there is need, in which connect to the investigator's familiarity and experience.
  - Furthermore, other individuals in the group can present on various topics as determined relevant to what people participating believe will be valuable to them.
- ❖ Continue growing and enhancing all aspects of the non-profit the researcher developed during the development of this dissertation, especially elements pertaining to the volunteer component and motivating and retaining them
  - While conducting this study, a personal family situation led the researcher to pursue a non-profit partnership as the president of the entity.
    - Given the researcher's background in this sector, doctoral field and research focus, and desire and passion for helping others experiencing

similar situations, they decided this opportunity was an excellent fit to explore.

- The idea of examining the motivation and retention of volunteers will allow the researcher to acquire a better understanding of how these factors impact the work that non-profits aim to provide communities. This idea will be useful to the projects, programs, and events to be implemented with their career pursuit because of the volunteer necessity to implement such ideas.
  - This non-profit provides education, research, awareness, advocacy, and support for families experiencing childhood illnesses. The primary audience for the education and research component of this non-profit are adults.
  - This organization allows the researcher to utilize their non-profit, educational background and expertise, leadership skills, personal and family medical experience, and passion for helping others to make a difference in the lives of others.
- Through enhancing the volunteer element of this organization, the hope is that this notion will allow the investigator to better fulfill the cause of the organization and the clientele being served.
  - The research has helped in various capacities with the establishment, planning, and programming of their recently formed non-profit.
    - These factors especially include a closer examination and understanding of organizational structure and elements closely

connected with recruiting, motivating, and retaining high quality volunteers in numerous forms.

- Additionally, the idea of having a better comprehension and awareness of volunteer needs is information incredibly valuable to not only the formation of a personal non-profit, but also in the on-going support necessary to sustain a successful and thriving organization.

### **Conclusion**

Fortunately, if there are non-profits, there will be a need for volunteers (Karwalajtys, et al., 2009) and these individuals contribute in a multitude of forms to these organizations that may not otherwise be possible due to a lack of funding. Volunteers are not needed in every non-profit as discovered throughout the research process for this study. Factors such as organizational size, key purpose, and clientele served may be determining factors if volunteers are necessary in non-profits. Furthermore, with several organizations identified in the Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract, the researcher found that newer and not as established non-profits, were less likely to contain volunteers compared to those who had been functioning for several years and had been operating longer. Some agencies have one paid staff person, such as the executive director and therefore, rely on volunteers to help carry out the work and mission of the organization. These concepts suggest the need for examining factors impacting the motivation and retention of volunteers.

Conclusions from what the researcher found are further addressed below. These suppositions are after weighing the evidence in Chapter 4. More specifically, this idea includes elements associated with volunteer motivation and retention through listening to each participants' story, which is believed to be valuable to program administrators.



The researcher acquired many conclusions throughout this study. This investigation validates the uniqueness adults can offer, which provide significance to volunteer roles in their communities. Not only does the researcher have a better awareness of what drives high-functioning adults' attraction to engage in volunteer roles or an organization, but also for these participants themselves. Furthermore, the factors impacting volunteer involvement is now more clear to the researcher regardless of how long the individual has been in a role. The researcher has acquired a better understanding of what is occurring among adult high-functioning volunteers related to motivation and retention in community non-profits, which will lead to becoming a recognized expert in this field.

Due to busy lifestyles and recognizing differences in volunteerism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century compared to in the past along with the lack of literature issue, there was a need to recognize what attracts them and makes them stay. This thought will help leaders and administrators understand why some people engage and others do not. It is important to determine the needs of the people or population planning to serve for program administrators and leaders to provide quality services that will benefit those who will help them carry out the mission of their organization. This study will assist in determining the parameters or criteria organizations have in place for volunteer recruiting.

As administrators, it is important to remember that volunteers are the key element or driving force of community non-profit programs; therefore, it is crucial to consider what draws them to an organization and make them continue active involvement. Furthermore, they want to know they matter and can play a role in making a remarkable difference. It is also vital to ensure the programs and efforts fit the needs of the volunteers. The necessity to build relationships with potential and already established volunteers and not appear to be selling them something is also

imperative. This notion can help with motivation and retention especially when allowing them the opportunity to “buy in” to the organization.

Not only does the data collected from the participants’ support information addressed in the literature available, but it also significantly expands and hones in on the research topic to further address many factors pertaining to the subject of volunteer motivation and retention. Because of this more defined information now available to this area of volunteerism, it is expected that non-profit volunteer programs can be significantly enhanced regardless of what their status or situation is. The hope is this study has gathered and analyzed data that can be used to enrich programs in various forms regardless if deemed necessary by the administrators of the non-profits affiliated with them. For instance, this may encompass enlightening those working with programs with ideas on how they can enrich their volunteer recruiting, motivation, and programming efforts to better satisfy volunteer desires of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is anticipated this notion will work towards growing the volunteer population among communities. It is expected that an enhanced comprehension of constituents pertaining to initial motivation, continued involvement, and retention of volunteers from an array of backgrounds will provide valuable data. This audience will likely encompass supervisors or people desiring to better understand how community-based non-profits operate and require volunteerism.

While this investigation fills a gap in the literature and successfully addresses the research question, which is aimed to assist administrators in their programming efforts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it should not be assumed that this study indefinitely solves a societal problem. Because the realm of volunteerism has significantly changed over the years (McKee & McKee, 2008), this topic should be continually addressed in the years to come. Furthermore, further research

should be explored to balance different components that impact or correlate with the focus of adult high-functioning volunteers in community-based non-profits.

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## Appendix A - Interview Worksheet for Volunteer Participants

The following are guidelines for the interviews:

- Guide participants to be expressive with their experiences as they relate to the interview questions and the focus of the research study.
- Intention is to collect empirical narrative human experiences
- Establish a conversational relation with each interviewee
- Request that each participant center on their personal experiences and occurrences as they pertain to the interview guide and study

The questions are representative of the direction taken during the interview. They are in no way inclusive of other ideas that may occur. They are intended to serve as a guide during the interview process. The questions are based on the four contradictory dimensions as identified by Salamon (2015) – voluntarism, professionalism, civic activism, and commercialism, which are outlined in the Functions of Community-Based Non-Profits Organizations sub-section of this dissertation proposal.

**Name (fictitious):** \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Name will not be disclosed/published in the study*

**Date/time of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview site:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Interview protocol:

- 1) Interviewer will provide overview of the study and the interviewees' role
- 2) Explain the informed consent form and ask the participant to sign
- 3) Familiarize the participant with the audio-recording process and explain that the recording can be halted at any time for breaks
- 4) Inform participant they have the right to not address any questions as they choose
- 5) Questions:

**Number of year volunteering** (in general and with the organization): \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization currently volunteering with:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position and brief description:**

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**Interview procedures for integrating participant responses into the study** (addressed in Informed Consent Form)

**Audio recording authorization** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature**

**OR Alternative procedures** \_\_\_\_\_ **Explain** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature**

- 1) Tell me about your experience volunteering in the community and the services you provide to your role as a volunteer. Please feel free to base your commentary on one or more roles and/or organizations you are involved with.
- 2) Briefly explain the make-up of the organization you volunteer with.
- 3) How did you find out about your volunteer position and how were you recruited?
- 4) Tell me about your thoughts on volunteer motivation and retention. In your opinion, what factors impact concepts relating to engagement and commitment in community-based non-profit organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of high-functioning volunteers? What do you believe makes them stay with an organization?
- 5) Tell me about what attracts you to volunteering in your local community and the specific organization(s) you are involved in.
- 6) What skills are most necessary in your volunteer role and why?
- 7) Please explain what you believe to be the greatest strength a volunteer can bring to an organization.
- 8) Please elaborate more on what motivates you to not only get involved in a specific role or agency, but also remain engaged with the position or organization? (Internally/externally motivation factors).
- 9) Briefly discuss how your organization works to motivate and retain volunteers. Do you believe improvement in these processes is necessary? If so, why?
- 10) Does your organization have an evaluation system in place where you are able to share your viewpoints on the program or organization as a whole? If so, please briefly explain.
- 11) Briefly discuss your expectations for volunteer administrators you are working with.
- 12) Do you feel appreciated in your volunteer role? Please explain.
- 13) What do you find most challenging as a volunteer?
- 14) Please describe the most rewarding elements of being a volunteer.

15) Do you have any additional insight you want to share concerning the topic of volunteer motivation and retention in community non-profit organizations?

**Conclusion of interview** – Express gratitude for participation and inform of need to review written transcript when available.

## Appendix B - Administrator Contact Letter for Recruiting Potential Interviewees

*Round one - initial request*

Dear xxxx:

My name is Sarah Diamond. I am a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University and am conducting my dissertation research on the motivation and retention of adult high-functioning volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations in Denver, Colorado. Your agency was randomly selected among 50 organizations from the Internal Revenue Service directory of non-profit entities in Denver.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors impacting the retention and motivation of high-functioning volunteers and to acquire a better understanding of what drives volunteers and keeps them volunteering with an organization or as a whole. The responses these individuals provide are more than just an answer; this is a step towards helping organizations enrich their volunteer-based programs in the community.

Your assistance in providing me with a list of volunteers you consider high-functioning in their roles among your organization will work toward enhancing elements of volunteerism among non-profits in the local community. If you are not involved in supervising volunteers, please direct me to the appropriate contact.

The following is the definition of high-functioning that was used in the dissertation research proposal and might be helpful for you in your decision making/selection process. *A high-functioning individual is someone who possesses a significant level of energy, knows how to perform work accurately, functions on a higher intellectual level, is not affected by low self-esteem, and goal oriented* (Quora, 2010). For the purposes of this study, an adult is defined as anyone over the age of 18. The exclusion criteria includes non-English speaking adults.

This information can be used to enrich the field of volunteerism in the following ways:

- ❖ Provide readers with knowledge that can be incorporated into their programming efforts, which can work towards improving the motivation and retention of volunteers
- ❖ Allow current high-functioning volunteers to become more aware of what drives their engagement
- ❖ Enhance current and future relationships of volunteers and administrators
- ❖ Determine factors impacting initial and continued involvement of volunteers and what makes them stay
- ❖ Gain a better understanding of how communities operate with volunteers
- ❖ Determine elements associated with ensuring volunteers are making best use of their time and the experience will be worth their time
- ❖ Help fill gaps in the literature

If your agency does not employ volunteers, please let me know and your organization will be eliminated accordingly. If you are interested in assisting with this study, the following is what this means for you and the participants.

#### Volunteer administrator

- ❖ Please respond by X xx, 2016 to the contact information listed below with your interest in assisting with this process and to notify when you anticipate having a list of potential participants.
- ❖ Once I receive a list of volunteers from you who are willing to release their name and contact information, I will then contact these individuals with an overview of the research and an invitation to participate.
- ❖ Please note, only one person from your organization will be able to participate in the study to allow for equal representation among the non-profits selected in Denver.

#### Participants

- ❖ Once each person has provided consent to participate in the study, an interview will be scheduled accordingly based on their availability.
- ❖ All information the participants provide will be kept confidential. Upon agreeing to participate in a one-hour long interview, the results from each participant will not have direct connection to a specific organization, but rather a general type and will include fictitious names.
- ❖ The participants will sign an informed consent form outlining the risks and benefits of contributing to the study prior to participating.
- ❖ The participants will have the option of meeting face-to-face or digitally (via Zoom or Skype) in July or August 2016 for a one-hour long interview. The interview will be recorded upon consent of the participant for transcription purposes to integrate into the study.
- ❖ The participants' participation in the study is voluntary and will work towards advancing the work of non-profits and overall enriching the community.
- ❖ The participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a \$50 Amazon gift certificate.
- ❖ The goal is to complete the data collection process in August 2016.

Thank you for your consideration in assisting with this process for the study. Please contact me at the email or phone number referenced below if you are interested in assisting with this study and any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Sarah Diamond, M.Ag.  
Kansas State University  
College of Education - Ed.D. Candidate, Educational Leadership  
Email: [sarahdd@ksu.edu](mailto:sarahdd@ksu.edu); Phone: (785) 341-4869

*Round two email - Reminder/follow-up with people who initially responded in some form of possibly assisting with the study – sent as needed*

Dear xx:

On X xx, 2016, we corresponded regarding my dissertation research study on the topic of retention and motivation among adult high-functioning volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations. I just wanted to follow-up with you on your interest in possibly assisting with this study by providing a list of individuals you consider high-functioning in their volunteer roles within your organization.

I have attached a copy of the participant invitation letter. If you are more comfortable making contacts with the high-functioning volunteers as potential participants and ask them to contact me directly with their interest, I completely understand. Or if these individuals are willing to have you share their contact information with me to contact them directly, this is fine as well. Just let me know.

Please let me know by X xx, 2016 if you are still interested in assisting with this process.

If you don't mind sharing some of the criteria you use or overall characteristics in identifying or classifying the volunteers as high-functioning, I would be interested in learning more about this and potentially include in my study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

Sarah Diamond, M.Ag.  
Kansas State University  
College of Education - Ed.D. Candidate, Educational Leadership

*Round two email after initial email sent – as needed basis*

Dear X:

On X xx, 2016, I contacted you via email regarding my dissertation research study on the topic of retention and motivation among adult high-functioning volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations. I just wanted to follow-up with you on this request in possibly assisting with this study by providing a list of individuals you consider high-functioning in their volunteer roles within your organization.

Please let me know by X xx, 2016 if you are interested in assisting with this process or have someone else you can help direct me to with your organization who can assist.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

Sarah Diamond, M.Ag.  
Kansas State University  
College of Education - Ed.D. Candidate, Educational Leadership



## Appendix C - Interview Invitation for Potential Participants

My name is Sarah Diamond and I am a Doctorate of Education candidate at Kansas State University. I am conducting my dissertation research on the motivation and retention of adult high-functioning volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations in Manhattan, Kansas. Your name was provided to me by xx with xx organization as someone who is considered a high-functioning volunteer. I am currently recruiting people to participate in a brief interview and I invite you to consider participating in this study.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors impacting the retention and motivation of high-functioning volunteers and to acquire a better understanding of what drives volunteers and keeps them volunteering with an organization or as a whole. Your responses to the questions are more than just an answer; this is a step towards helping organizations enrich their volunteer-based programs in the community.

The following is the definition of high-functioning that was used in the dissertation research proposal. *A high-functioning individual is someone who possesses a significant level of energy, knows how to perform work accurately, functions on a higher intellectual level, is not affected by low self-esteem, and goal oriented* (Quora, 2010). I am currently recruiting people to participate in a brief interview and I invite you to consider participating in this study.

All information you provide will be kept confidential. Upon agreeing to participate, the results from each participant will not have direct connection to a specific organization, but rather a general type and will include fictitious names. This will be strictly managed throughout the entire research process. Upon expressing an interest in participating, you will be provided with an informed consent form for you to sign, which outlines the risks and benefits of contributing to this study.

This information can be used to enrich the field of volunteerism in the following ways:

- ❖ Provide readers with knowledge that can be incorporated into their programming efforts, which can work towards improving the motivation and retention of volunteers
- ❖ Allow current high-functioning volunteers to become more aware of what drives their engagement
- ❖ Enhance current and future relationships of volunteers and administrators
- ❖ Determine factors impacting initial and continued involvement of volunteers and what makes them stay
- ❖ Gain a better understanding of how communities operate with volunteers
- ❖ Determine elements associated with ensuring volunteers are making best use of their time and the experience will be worth their time
- ❖ Help fill gaps in the literature

The interview will last approximately one hour in length depending on the responses offered. The meeting location and day/time of the week is flexible based on your availability. Participants will have the option of meeting face-to-face in Denver or digitally via Zoom or Skype in November. The interview will be recorded upon consent of the participant for transcription purposes to integrate into the study.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please provide some dates and times you are available to meet for an interview session. The goal is to complete the data collection process in November 2016.

Please consider participating in this brief interview about the motivation and retention of volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations. Your participation is voluntary and will work towards advancing the work of non-profits and overall enriching the community. Interview participants will be entered into a drawing to receive a \$50 Amazon gift certificate.

Thank you for your consideration in participating in this study. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Please contact me at the email or phone number referenced below if you are interested in participating in this study and reference your preference of meeting – face-to-face, Zoom, or Skype, in addition to some upcoming times you are available to interview.

Sincerely,

Sarah Diamond, M.Ag.  
Kansas State University  
College of Education - Ed.D. Candidate, Educational Leadership  
Email: sarahdd@ksu.edu; Phone: (785) 341-4869

*Email submitted to potential participant suggested by volunteer administrator*

Hi X:

My name is Sarah Diamond. I am a Doctorate of Education candidate at Kansas State University. I am conducting my dissertation research on the motivation and retention of adult high-functioning volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations in Denver, Colorado. Your name was provided to me by Erica Wright with the Parkinson Association of the Rockies as someone who is considered a high-functioning volunteer.

Please see the attached invitation (refer to the letter addressed above) to participate in my study. I appreciate your consideration.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sarah Diamond, M.Ag.

Kansas State University  
College of Education - Ed.D. Candidate, Educational Leadership

*Potential participant follow-up email*

Hi X:

On X xx, 2016, I contacted you via email regarding my dissertation research study on the topic of retention and motivation among adult high-functioning volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations. I just wanted to follow-up with you on this request in possibly assisting with this study by allowing me to interview you.

Please let me know by X xx, 2016 if you are interested in participating in this study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

Sarah Diamond, M.Ag.  
Kansas State University  
College of Education - Ed.D. Candidate, Educational Leadership

## Appendix D - Informed Consent Form

### KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

*The development of the Informed Consent Form was constructed through reviewing and following the template from the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board website found at <http://www.k-state.edu/comply/irb>.*

**PROJECT TITLE:** AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE MOTIVATION AND RETENTION OF ADULT HIGH-FUNCTIONING VOLUNTEERS IN COMMUNITY-BASED NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

**APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** W. Franklin Spikes, Ed.D.

**CO-INVESTIGATOR:** Sarah D. Diamond

**CONTACT NAME AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:** Dr. W. Franklin Spikes, (785) 532-5873

**IRB CHAIR CONTACT INFORMATION:**

- Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subject, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas 66506, (785) 532-1483

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** Internal dissertation research – College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** The purpose of this research study is to investigate the factors impacting the retention and motivation of high-functioning adult volunteers and to acquire a better understanding of what drives them and keeps them volunteering a community-based non-profit organization. This information can be used to enrich the field of volunteerism for practitioners and volunteers.

**PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:** live, audio recorded interviews to be transcribed into narrative text

**ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENT, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:** If participants are not comfortable with an audio recording, they can opt out of this option and have their responses manually recorded.

**LENGTH OF STUDY:** One interview per participant. The length of each session will vary based on the depth of the participant responses. Approximately two hours will be spent reviewing and revising each transcript.

**RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS ANTICIPATED:** Participant selection criterion method eliminates risk

**BENEFITS ANTICIPATED:**

This study will offer the following:

- Provide readers with knowledge from high-functioning adult volunteers that administrators can incorporate into their programming efforts. This notion can work towards improving the motivation and retention of volunteers they work with or seek to engage in the organization.
- Allow current high-functioning adult volunteers to enlighten volunteer managers and become more aware of what drives their engagement in their roles. This notion may potentially help them further succeed in their work and inspire others to do so and/or attract new volunteers.
- Enhance current and future relationships of volunteers and the administrators they work with through the following:
  - Creating a better understanding of volunteer needs
  - Offer solutions to help resolve deterrents that may prevent volunteers from reaching their fullest potential even if they are already considered high-functioning
  - Enable managers to grasp information valuable to recruiting new volunteers
- Determine what factors impact initial and continued involvement of high-functioning adult volunteers and what makes them stay
- Increase and enhance the motivation and retention of adult volunteers in community non-profit organizations to benefit the volunteer program and organization as a whole
- Help fill gaps in the literature
- Help administrators better structure their marketing and programming strategies in an effort to better fulfill the needs of adult volunteers
- Gain a better understanding of how communities operate with volunteers and the key roles necessary to effectively manage adult volunteers

**EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY:** Participant identity will be protected by use of fictitious names to preserve anonymity. Only the researcher and transcriptionist will have access to the transcripts of participant interviews and will ensure no actual names are associated with the summaries provided from such transcripts.

**IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS:** N/A

**PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS:** N/A

**TERMS OF PARTICIPATION:** I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may

withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness to Signature: (project staff)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E - Recording Authorization for Volunteer Participants

The following are guidelines for the interviews:

- Guide participants to be expressive with their experiences as they relate to the interview questions and the focus of the research study.
- Intention is to collect empirical narrative human experiences
- Establish a conversational relation with each interviewee
- Request that each participant center on their personal experiences and occurrences as they pertain to the interview guide and study

The questions are representative of the direction taken during the interview. They are in no way inclusive of other ideas that may occur. They are intended to serve as a guide during the interview process. The questions are based on the four contradictory dimensions as identified by Salamon (2015) – voluntarism, professionalism, civic activism, and commercialism, which are outlined in the Functions of Community-Based Non-Profits Organizations sub-section of this dissertation proposal.

**Name (fictitious):** \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Name will not be disclosed/published in the study*

**Date/time of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interview site:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Interview protocol:

- 6) Interviewer will provide overview of the study and the interviewees' role
- 7) Explain the informed consent form and ask the participant to sign
- 8) Familiarize the participant with the audio-recording process and explain that the recording can be halted at any time for breaks
- 9) Inform participant they have the right to not address any questions as they choose
- 10) Questions:

**Number of year volunteering** (in general and with the organization): \_\_\_\_\_

**Organization currently volunteering with:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position and brief description:**

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**Interview procedures for integrating participant responses into the study** (addressed in Informed Consent Form)

**Audio recording authorization** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature**

## **Appendix F - Statement of Researcher's Prior Beliefs**

The following ideas are based on observations and experiences of the researcher:

- 1) Volunteers are essential to the success of community-based non-profit organizations.
- 2) Volunteers desire to know the work they are doing is making a difference.
- 3) People who are retired or unemployed may sometimes be more apt to commit to long-term or standing volunteer appointments compared to those who work full-time.
- 4) Recognition of volunteers is imperative and impacts motivation and retention.
- 5) It is imperative to properly match volunteers to roles that are appropriately fitting to their skills, background, and interests, which is essential for motivation and retention.
- 6) Those who recruit volunteers may not always be volunteer administrators, but sometimes other volunteers themselves.
- 7) Volunteers contribute unique experiences to not only the roles they serve, but also the program and organizations with which they work.
- 8) Because of the potential attributes volunteers can offer, they can make significant impacts in their communities.
- 9) Even a little time as a regular commitment can go a long way in the field of volunteerism.



## **Appendix G - Personal Reflection of Relevant Lived Experiences**

My experiences pertinent to this study include serving in numerous capacities as a volunteer for several years and working a volunteer administrator and director in a local community-based non-profit organization, a religious institution. While working in these capacities, I had the opportunity to immensely expand my overall knowledge of volunteerism. I became acquainted with the unique experiences, backgrounds, and passions adults can contribute to any array of volunteer roles in a 900+ member congregation. Furthermore, these experiences enabled me to understand elements relevant to serving in a volunteer position and in an administrative and leadership role working directly with volunteers.

While I have, experience working in another field of the non-profit sector, Cooperative Extension, I believe my tenure in a religious institution has had the greatest impact on shaping my passion in volunteerism among community-based non-profit organizations. This background has also aided in discovering my interest in leadership development in the non-profit sector. The doctoral internship project (preliminary study) helped trigger the focus of this study and assessing components impacting the motivation and retention of volunteers and collecting their viewpoints. This venture involved interviewing administrators among an array of non-profit agencies on their perspectives of leadership development pertaining to volunteerism.

## Appendix H - Institutional Review Board Approval



University Research Compliance Office

TO: Franklin Spikes  
Educational Leadership  
351 Bluemont

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair   
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 04/18/2016

RE: Proposal #8226.1, entitled "An exploratory study of the motivation and retention of high-functioning adult volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations."

A MINOR MODIFICATION OF PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROPOSAL #8226,  
ENTITLED, "An exploratory study of the motivation and retention of high-functioning adult  
volunteers in community-based non-profit organizations"

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects at Kansas State University has approved the proposal identified above as a minor modification of a previously approved proposal, and has determined that it is exempt from further review. This exemption applies only to the most recent proposal currently on file with the IRB. Any additional changes affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Unanticipated adverse events or problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the IRB Chair, and / or the URCO.

It is important that your human subjects project is consistent with submissions to funding/contract entities. It is your responsibility to initiate notification procedures to any funding/contract entity of changes in your project that affects the use of human subjects.